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ABSTRACT

This book is concerned with stimulating student government and developing student responsibility in the school. The author's basic premise is that there are ways to strengthen even the weakest student structure so that it serves students in a school and leads the way to a new spirit of student involvement. The booklet looks at various student structures with an emphasis on the strengths and weaknesses of each, and offers suggestions for constructive change, the maintenance of a student government once it has been established, and guidelines for working on issues such as student rights and responsibilities. The book also looks briefly beyond the school at public government and national student government associations. It concludes with an appendix divided into three sections: (1) a sample constitution: the traditional student council, (2) a sample constitution: the student-faculty senate, and (3) school government: shared responsibility. Throughout the report, a strong case is made for student involvement with the power structures in the schools and school systems. (Author/BW)

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Student Structures: Moving Toward Student Government

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Foreword

Today's student leaders are seeking ways to work within their schools to improve the climate of the school community. In contrast to the recent past, their methods today often include cooperation with school administrators and faculty members. In turn, many administrators and teachers are looking for ways to help their students to participate more fully in the life of their schools.

Student Structures: Moving Toward Student Government is a useful tool in building greater student participation. Author Donald Murphy is the coordinator of student government activities for a large Maryland school district bordering Washington, D.C. He deals daily with student concerns, with students seeking solutions to school problems, and with administrators who believe in students' capabilities to assume responsibility. His outlines for assessing student representative organizations and for accomplishing change and growth reflect his experience in the front lines of the move toward greater student participation.

NASSP presents *Student Structures: Moving Toward Student Government* as a strong case for student involvement—a logical complement to the dedicated professional involvement of the principal.

Owen B. Kiernan
Executive Secretary
National Association of Secondary School Principals

Preface

This book is about student government and other student structures in secondary schools. It is dedicated to a belief in student government and a willingness to show students how to breathe life into student representative organizations – even those that seem at times to be beyond help. The author's basic premise is that there are ways to strengthen even the weakest student structure so that it serves students in a school and leads the way to a new spirit of student involvement.

You won't find a philosophy of student involvement spelled out in these pages, but a careful reader will discover a bias between the lines. I *am biased* about student involvement – I strongly believe that students can and should involve themselves in the issues that affect their schools. Difficult issues such as student rights, school crime, desegregation, and race relations *are* student concerns, and student involvement in these areas is not only the purpose of student government but its very salvation. I've devoted Chapter 4 to two of these issues – student rights and school crime – to show how students and student groups can work constructively for change in critical areas.

Students must work with principals, faculty, school staff, and parents to arrive at solutions to school problems. Student groups must gear themselves to the challenge of participation in areas where they have not traditionally been involved. The courts have made it clear that legal authority in a school resides in the principal, the superintendent of schools, and the board of education. With this understood, students have the right and the responsibility to make a case for their own involvement and to negotiate the terms of that involvement with the power structures in the schools and school systems.

After all, isn't that what governing is all about?

D. Murphy

Introduction

Student Structures: Moving Toward Student Government is a statement about student potential—the potential to create responsible student representative organizations that can have a big share of decision-making powers in schools. The book is based on a call to reason and a dedication to furthering student participation in educational systems.

We anticipate that you'll quickly tune in to two important messages of this book. First, student leaders, as representatives of large numbers of other students, have the mandate and the responsibility to make their organizations responsive to the real concerns of students. Second, students' opportunity to create meaningful student government is greater now than it has ever been before.

This book is *not* a fail-safe program for developing student responsibility in your school. That is where we step out and you step in. You'll have to take the outlines you'll find here and color them in according to your own understandings and perspectives. You'll have to add the footnotes and refine the definitions. If you do—and we hope you will—you'll have taken a big step toward creating the kind of student involvement that will enrich the lives of individual students and the entire school community.

NASSP Office of
Student Activities

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1. A Look at Student Structures

"That's a great idea. I wish we could try that at our school. We've been looking for some examples of how student councils in other schools operate. But we didn't know that some schools aren't even calling it 'student council' any more."

This statement was overheard at a conference of student leaders during an information exchange on how their respective student groups are structured. "We meet once a week for a period." "We meet only twice a month after school." "We're called student government." "We're called student-faculty senate." And, so on . . . .

Perhaps the most important result of the conference was the convincing evidence that there are *many* ways to organize student government. Have you explored what other schools are doing? Once you understand the basic structures, your school can start a drive to make good government even better.

A student structure is an organized student group whose purpose is planning and participating in high school decisions and activites and which has official recognition in the school community. Some of the better known student structures are:

- ☐ traditional student council
- ☐ student-faculty senate
- ☐ student advisory council
- ☐ ad hoc student groups

These structures, which have distinctive as well as common features, are discussed in this introductory chapter. They have been selected for review because they represent a cross section of the many kinds of student structures.

The Traditional Student Council

Information and news concerning student councils began to circulate from state to state during the 1930's. By the late 1940's, many American high schools had installed a student council, and in 1945 an extensive study of school and student leader opinion verified that high school student councils were following similar paths.

A good student council was generally agreed to have:

- ☐ Clearly defined powers and responsibilities which its members and constituents understand.
- ☐ Democratic principles of operation; its constitution and by-laws are carefully planned and democratically conceived.
- ☐ The support of the faculty and principal, who have a true understanding of the council's role; the attitude of the principal and faculty is sympathetic.

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- ☐ A stable structure.
- ☐ Prestige, ideals of service to the school, and the ready cooperation of the student body.

These five basic standards stood as the objectives for the student council as it became an established institution and sought to represent the student voice.

The traditional student council still serves many students in high schools. It is structured according to a charter or constitution which usually includes: name of the organization, purposes of the organization, power and authority, organization and membership, qualifications and duties for officers and members, committee structure, meeting schedule, adviser responsibilities, amendments, and bylaws. See page 00 for a sample constitution. The student council:

- ☐ promotes school spirit
- ☐ raises money
- ☐ sponsors academic, recreational, and social activities
- ☐ works on improving the school plant (for example, obtaining a smoking area, student lounge, senior courtyard, or jukeboxes)
- ☐ works on improving lunch service
- ☐ undertakes and supports community service projects
- ☐ opens the floor to new student issues and concerns.

These are only a few examples of student council activities.

Some Strengths of the Student Council

The traditional student council has lasted a long time. Some of the reasons for its popularity are that it:

- ☐ attracts interested (often academic) students who can get things done and voice opinions
- ☐ uses parliamentary procedure for the orderly discussion of issues
- ☐ teaches parliamentary procedure to representatives
- ☐ allows for active participation by interested students.
- ☐ teaches practical skills that will be useful throughout life
- ☐ supports the democratic process.

Some Weaknesses of the Student Council

The emergence of student activism during the late 1960's led to a critical review of student institutions, especially student councils. As the critics said their piece, common themes surfaced and the traditional student council structure took its licks along with other groups. The traditional student council:

- ☐ attracts interested, academic students who don't always perceive what is on the disgruntled student's mind

- ☐ uses parliamentary procedure as a game that the bright student plays well
- ☐ often becomes a select, elite club rather than a representative governing body
- ☐ teaches practical skills, but usually takes so much time at it that student concerns rarely get dealt with
- ☐ has inadequate minority representation
- ☐ spends too much time and energy on mock elections and staging political party conventions, rather than on getting involved in real political situations.

The validity of these indictments is difficult to prove. But the criticism has given cause for serious review and new approaches over the past several years. Other kinds of structures, such as the ones highlighted in the pages that follow, have sprouted as a kind of re-thinking and revision of effective student involvement.

The term "student council" itself is giving way to "student government" as schools push to elevate the image of student structures. This fact is a point of emphasis for the remainder of this book. It is also a symbolic reminder of the necessary self-examination that student groups must continually undergo in order to remain responsive to students' needs.

The Student-Faculty Senate

Student-faculty senates, composed of representatives from the student body and the faculty, have been formed in some schools and have sometimes replaced student councils.

The student-faculty senate usually functions in open meetings, using common courtesy rules to govern discussion. A discussion format allows students and faculty to respond to issues that are raised by the principal or one of the school community groups. The senate is composed of 10 to 15 faculty representatives, the same number of student representatives, and the school principal or his designated representative. The sample constitution on page 59 describes the senate's organization and purposes.

The senate reacts to issues brought to it by the school administrators and recommends action that would be acceptable to faculty and students. It may suggest ways of carrying out the decision, but rarely becomes the implementing group. What it does, is discuss. By bringing teachers and students together face to face, hot issues are automatically cooled down a few degrees and therefore more likely to be handled rationally. The senate is a fairly new structure in the schools and has a great deal going for it, if only because students and faculties are wrestling over the same issues together rather than separately in closed meetings.

Some Strengths of the Student-Faculty Senate

The student-faculty senate:

- ☐ functions with few rules and regulations to inhibit discussion
- ☐ is small enough to allow for airing of all members' views
- ☐ enables students and staff to present a united front
- ☐ provides format for in-depth study of an issue of concern to the school
- ☐ is problem-centered.

Some Weaknesses of the Student-Faculty Senate

The student-faculty senate:

- ☐ functions so loosely that discussion gets bogged down
- ☐ is so small that the majority of students feel little or no representation
- ☐ waters down student concerns
- ☐ often does not deal with variety of issues
- ☐ deals with individual problems of members rather than school problems.

The senate structure is gaining in popularity and is easily modified to accommodate those who advocate a structure of "school government." Here, diverse school groups meet together instead of separately.

The Student Advisory Council (SAC)

When the student council has little or no credibility in a school, the principal, some concerned faculty members, or a group of students frequently make the move to create a new, less formal group. Such a group is often called a student advisory council.

The student advisory council retains many of the vestiges of the old student council, such as homeroom representatives and a slate of officers. But it does away with parliamentary procedure and operates less formally in advising the principal. Generally, it has no charter or constitution.

Take a little of what the traditional student council does and a little of what the student-faculty senate does—minus teacher input—and you get pretty much what the SAC does. Everything from the Valentine's Day Dance to an in-depth discussion of how to cope with drug abuse in the school can and usually is handled by this type of student structure.

Some Strengths of the Student Advisory Council

The student advisory council:

- ☐ provides for regular, routine discussion between students and the principal
- ☐ through its format, encourages students to present viewpoints openly and spontaneously

- ☐ encourages the active, regular participation of the principal
- ☐ stimulates discussion about more issues and problems than does a more structured student group
- ☐ promotes active participation by its members.

Some Weaknesses of the Student Advisory Council

The student advisory council:

- ☐ has no built-in mechanism for carrying out decisions
- ☐ sometimes frustrates student representatives because discussion, rather than solutions and action, is the main activity
- ☐ provides little opportunity for students to develop and document positions
- ☐ often results in discussion of individual student grievances rather than major student issues
- ☐ does not have objectives which are readily understood by the student body.

Ad Hoc Student Groups

Ad hoc student groups may be large or small, meet regularly or just once, and may be representative or selective. No one description can be given for this category! An issue comes up, and a group of students organizes to deal with it in the best way they know how. Examples of issues or factors giving birth to this type of student organization are:

- ☐ energy crisis—students group together and use the school as a point of organization for effecting federal and state energy legislation.
- ☐ federal funds—students find out that federal monies are available for drug prevention and organize to develop a school drug program.
- ☐ relevant curriculum—students are introduced to social issues through a new social studies course, and they decide to organize into a group to work in the community.

The issues change and are as diverse as the students attracted to them, but they have become a jumping off point for new, informal student structures in the school setting. Sudden and spontaneous community pressure can and often does stimulate ad hoc groups into faster action than the more traditional groups are capable of. A windfall of local or state funds (for example, for recreation) can be sought quickly by an ad hoc group that is not tied to a fixed meeting schedule or a two-thirds vote requirement. Ad hoc groups seldom have written procedures or a constitution of any kind.

Some Strengths of the Ad Hoc Group

Ad hoc groups usually do a job quickly and well because they concentrate on one issue at a time. The ad hoc group:

- ☐ captivates the genuine interest of the student
- ☐ is free to establish its own work schedule
- ☐ seeks practical solutions
- ☐ can dissolve when issues have been treated
- ☐ is not hampered by traditional meeting agendas
- ☐ has natural leadership.

Some Weaknesses of the Ad Hoc Group

The ad hoc group:

- ☐ ignores regular leadership training
- ☐ often cannot implement its solutions
- ☐ may not be able to provide continuous service to students
- ☐ is difficult to control because of its looseness.

Two questions raised by the growth of issue-oriented, ad hoc student groups are: How do they fit into the school? and How do they function in relation to student council or other accepted student structures? These questions have been largely ignored, but they are critical ones for both ad hoc groups and traditional student structures. Some coordination of all groups is essential. But which group becomes the coordinating one?

School Government—A Prototype

If any government structure in schools can be labeled ideal, it is probably one that involves all groups in the school. The name *school government* is important, because it symbolizes the transition from special interest group structures of government to total involvement of all the people who live and work in the school community. *School community* is a catch-all title used by educators to include students, faculty, administrators, custodians, supporting personnel, guidance counselors, parents, and other structural community groups. A move to school government signifies full and total participation by all of these and requires a longlasting commitment (going beyond the months of a school year) and a dedication to shared power and shared decision-making.

As a member of a student group, you could begin the discussion which might lead your school toward school government, but it is unrealistic to assume that students (or any other one group in the school) can bring about school government on their own. After all, school government *means* shared decision making.

Of the school governments operating around the country, one is at Richfield High School in Richfield, Minn., and another is at Yorktown High School in Arlington, Va. Both have

succeeded because of a deep commitment on the part of *all* groups in the school. For a description of how the Richfield School Council operates, see page 66. The constitution of the Yorktown Student-Faculty-Administrator Council is on page 68.

2. Moving Toward Change

"We don't need a constitution. It's holding us back."

"We could cut out about 90 percent of these bylaws."

"An *amendment*? I suggest an amendment that we throw the whole thing out!"

"We need at least five more committees."

"We ought to get rid of at least five of these committees."

"Why is this in the constitution, anyway?"

"I've never seen it."

"I don't think the constitution is the problem—I think it's the whole attitude of the people in student government. They're apathetic."

"Burn it."

The first thing to consider when someone mentions changing the constitution is whether or not the constitution is the real problem. It is too convenient for people to blame the ineffectiveness of a student government on its "restrictive" or "antique" constitution.

Take two student governments, each operating under a similar constitution. The students in group A are truly interested in their school, and their student government works well. Student government B's members do a lot of infighting, report irregularly to the student body, and make most meetings a contest in the rules of parliamentary procedure—who can shout the finest point the loudest. Student government B will be ineffective even if it has a constitution drafted by the U.S. Supreme Court!

In this chapter, we'll discuss methods to measure arguments for and against constitutional change—and how to effect a change once it has been decided that one is necessary.

Most schools have not experimented extensively with changing the form of their student government, even though many of their student government organizations have come under heavy criticism from students and faculty. While the school is the logical place for new ideas and experimentation, it has been dragging its feet—probably because it's more comfortable to rely on proven performance. Students, even though they sense the need for a change, are frequently unsure of just *how* to move or of what form change should take. A good look at the student government's constitution is an appropriate first step.

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A Warning Against "Constitutionitis"

Unfortunately, the constitution is often examined only for its fine points. One symptom of "constitutionitis" is an excessive attention to the mechanics of parliamentary procedure and to the details of the constitution, whose finest points are unearthed, polished, and displayed.

When constitutionitis affects a student government group, students take great pride in their knowledge of technicalities, and their fidelity to all the small print in Roberts' Rules of Order. Some students make a sport of using parliamentary techniques to squelch opposing viewpoints. At many meetings, students who would like to contribute and have much to say are unwilling or unable to play the game—and their valuable viewpoints are lost. Score one point for the elite group of constitutional experts; foul on the "outsiders." The elite, who are umpiring the game, keep winning; but the school is losing—on technicalities. Meanwhile, the student body, being a lot brighter than the elite gives it credit for, soon loses faith in its government. To the constitutional experts, it is obviously time to change the constitution—obvious to them, but to no one else.

A Reality Test for Student Governments

The image of student government as elite, out-of-touch, and ineffective is inaccurate, but it does represent a reality test that all student governments should have to pass. *Robert's Rules*, while it is a valuable tool, won't help you there. What will help you is a self-investigation. Here are some acid tests to apply to your student government:

I. *Is the student government really dealing with student concerns?*

   A. As a group or as individuals, brainstorm the problems that have been expressed by students in your school—parking space, excessive homework assignments, not enough school dances, problems in the halls—whatever they are. It doesn't matter how wide-ranging the problems are. In fact, the more diversity, the better the test!

   B. Make an outline of problems. Once you are satisfied that the outline is as extensive as it should be, compare the problem areas with your student council meeting agendas and minutes. If student council is really into the discussion of key school problems and issues, then you ought to be able to draw a lot of connecting lines between your new outline and the items in your recent agendas and minutes. If you were unable to make any connections, the conclusion should hit you right between the eyes!

II. *Does the student government structure provide for fair representation?*

A. Plot on a map the geographic area that feeds into your school, showing residential patterns in the school district, street names, and population statistics. Visit the office that is responsible for drawing up attendance areas to find out where your students are coming from. Where are the pockets of student concentration? Are there any distinctive smaller or mini-communities which are homogeneous but feed into the larger school community?

B. Complete the map, using your own symbols. Then have each student council representative put a pin in the map indicating his residence. Now, take a good hard look at it. Are all geographic areas, communities, or neighborhoods represented on the student council? Are there dead spots or blank spaces in any of the areas where large numbers of students live? If so, then it's likely that students from those areas do not really know a council representative on a personal basis. They should. Representation should be restructured to fill in those blank spots. There is a good chance that students will take their problems to "their" representative, someone who lives in "their" community, someone with whom they have a personal relationship.

C. Take a look at the racial composition of the student council and compare it to the total school population. Are minority groups represented? If 15 percent of your student population is of a minority race, how many minority representatives sit on the student council?

Now you have some indication of whether or not you're working on real student concerns and how representative your student government is.

Make Your Own Test!

Test yourselves in other areas to get a real picture of where your student government is. The measurements don't have to be as elaborate as those suggested above. A simple "yes-no" quiz for student government members and students selected at random will be enough. Here's a sample:

Image

1. A lot of people call student government a "do nothing" group. Do you think that your student government fits this category?

Yes ___ No ___

Elections

2. In some schools, students running for executive office in student government

have run unopposed. During the past two elections for officers in your school, has anyone running for president or vice president been unopposed?

Yes No

Finances

3. Making and spending money has always been important to student governments. Do you have less than $50 in your student government treasury?

Yes No

Does your student government spend more than 50 percent of its time discussing how it's going to make money and making it?

Yes No

Implementation

4. During business sessions, most student governments consider and vote on resolutions or bills. Has it been more than a semester since your student government adopted and implemented a resolution that was approved by the principal?

Yes No

Procedures

5. Student government general assembly meetings are generally conducted according to some rules of operation. Are your meetings disorganized, chaotic, and seemingly without purpose?

Yes No

Decision Making

6. Some student governments feel that they should play a part in establishing school rules and policies. Does your student government have a major responsible role in revising and developing school rules and discipline codes in your school?

Yes No

Sharing Information

7. Representatives to student government are charged with the responsibility of reporting back to the students they represent. Do the representatives to your student government communicate the results of student government activities

to their constituents at least once a month?

___ ___
Yes No

Regularity of Meetings

8. General assemblies are composed of representatives, officers, and advisers, and it is during the meetings of this total group that most of the official business of student government is conducted. Does your student government General Assembly meet at least eight times during the school year in sessions of two or more hours?

___ ___
Yes No

Grievance Issues

9. In recent years, students have claimed the right to present individual and group student grievances to school district officials, using local channels such as student government as a first step up the ladder. Has your student government ever been approached to help resolve student grievances?

___ ___
Yes No

Maintenance

10. Criticisms directed at student government associations often include references to sloppy wording in resolutions, inaccurate files, and inefficient processing of student government mail. Does your student government have a written system for wording resolutions, keeping records, and handling mail?

___ ___
Yes No

Let's examine some of the possible results. If the response to the first question is "yes," it indicates that student government has not made much of an impact. Your programs and/or image may need some work. Take question 6. A negative response indicates that the student government needs to pick up some skills for working with the power structure. Some ideas on how to do this can be found on page 00. If other test items are analyzed in a similar way, you'll end up with a composite picture of the weak or non-functioning areas of the student government in your school.

The results of the test can be used as sound arguments for changing the way student government operates. If this can be accomplished by revising the constitution, fine. Go ahead and

make some changes in the document to reflect real need rather than general dissatisfaction.

This evaluation of your student government may indicate that more major changes are needed than can be accomplished by just amending the constitution. Perhaps the *structure* of the organization needs to be modified. The following model reflects this kind of new direction and change, but you will have to adapt it to your own school's needs.

A Model Format for Student Government

Name

Student Government Association, hereafter referred to as Student Association (SA)

Organization

- ☐ *General Assembly* (GA). This is the representative body of the SA. It is composed of students who have qualified themselves as representatives by obtaining petitions with valid student signatures from at least one percent of the student body or one student signature for every 100 students in the school.
- ☐ *Steering Committee*—This is the workhorse and clearinghouse for the General Assembly, and should include no more than 18 students: elected officers of the GA (moderator, assistant moderator); appointed officers of the GA (secretary, treasurer); chairpeople of the seven or eight standing committees of the GA; six or seven other GA members who volunteer or are democratically selected by the GA.
- ☐ *Moderator*. The chief student executive of the Student Association is elected from and by the General Assembly. The term of office will be approximately 18 weeks, or one semester. At the end of this service period, the General Assembly may confirm the same moderator for an additional semester term or proceed in the election of a new moderator.
- ☐ *Assistant Moderator*. This person will assume the responsibilities of the moderator whenever the moderator is absent from his post. Election procedures for this office are the same as those outlined for the moderator.
- ☐ *Committees*. The membership of each committee, which in most cases should not exceed nine, is drawn from both the General Assembly and the student body. It is open to all teachers and administrators.

A. *Standing Committees* function for the duration of a school year. Suggested standing committees are:

Budget and Finance

Legislation

Policies and Procedures
Evaluation
Information
Activities
Charter and Calendar
Grievance

B. *Ad hoc committees* may be appointed by the moderator to study a specific issue and make recommendations regarding it.

Meeting Schedule

- ☐ General Assembly meetings should occur regularly. A suggested interval is twice a month for at least one class (or one hour) period. All meetings will be open to observers who have every right of participation except the right to vote.
- ☐ The Steering Committee should meet at least twice a month (one week prior to any GA meeting), and preferably every week during the school day. In cases where flexibility in scheduling exists, Steering Committee members should be given the opportunity to schedule their meetings as a class period.
- ☐ Standing committees should meet during and/or after the school day. Some may have intensive work at specific times during the school year, and others may need regularly scheduled monthly meetings.
- ☐ Ad hoc committees should meet during and/or after the school day for whatever length of time is needed to accomplish their specific task. Upon completion of the job, the ad hoc committee is dissolved.

A Prescription For Adopting a New Student Structure

- ☐ Consider establishing an interim council consisting of 15 or 20 people who have expressed an interest in revising the existing student structure. This group should:
  (1) disseminate detailed information to the student body about the proposed new format.
  (2) establish a systematic way for receiving student body reaction to the new structure. Presentations in social studies classes and open meetings are helpful.
  (3) establish a work schedule with teachers and the principal to review the new plan.
  (4) begin preparing a list of job responsibilities for representatives, the moderator, the general assembly, and the steering committee.
  (5) plan an initial meeting schedule for the general assembly and steering committee.

(6) develop, communicate, and initiate petition machinery for recruiting representatives to the GA.
(7) after targeting a transition day for the GA and its steering committee to assume all duties, dissolve the interim council.

The Model Student Government—A Critical View

Some Positive Points

- ☐ The General Assembly is open to anyone with an interest and commitment to serve, since students no longer depend on their friends to nominate them in homerooms or English classes. Anyone can initiate a petition on his own.
- ☐ The all-school popularity contest is avoided, because the moderator is elected indirectly by the student body through the GA.
- ☐ The GA remains open throughout the year to any new representatives who obtain valid petitions.
- ☐ Students who are not GA members but do have concerns about their school can use the legitimate channel of the GA to bring their ideas to public attention.
- ☐ Committee work schedules are reinforced, because standing committee chairmen serve on the Steering Committee, which determines deadlines and holds committees accountable for their tasks.

Some Things to Watch Out For

- ☐ The openness of the General Assembly requires informal operating procedures. These procedures must be skillfully handled in order to avoid chaotic meetings. It is difficult to predict the size of the assembly since petitioning for representatives results in a GA which fluctuates in size. It is probably best to wait until the size of the General Assembly stabilizes before laying down a firm set of procedures for conducting meetings.
- ☐ Communication by representatives with students who signed their petitions (constituents) requires new approaches, since homeroom or class organization is no longer the base by which representatives are elected. Bulletin boards and personal contact may help.

Academic Credit for Student Government

Speaking of change, how would you like to receive course credit for student government work? The question is not altogether unrealistic—one California school system with several thousand students *requires* all elected student leaders to take a leadership class for credit.

The trend of offering regular or elective credit is an interesting one that fits in well with the attention that is being given

to career exploration and practical experiences for students. Learning about representative democracy and working in a representative student government structure is a combination that goes a long way toward a primary goal of education—citizenship training.

Whether the experiment involves no credit, regular credit, or elective credit, the common denominator is regularly scheduled class time. Often, those elected or appointed to student government are given the opportunity to enroll in a *non-credit student government class* supervised by a student government adviser as part of his regular teaching load.

In this type of class, letter grades are de-emphasized, and designations such as pass/fail or satisfactory are usually used. The normal class time is spent on student-government related matters—committees meet, officers plan agendas, and representatives go about their regular duties. The adviser coordinates but usually does not teach. In essence, this option allows *daily* rather than *weekly* meetings, and it provides little beyond additional time for student government work.

The second option is offering *student government as a course for academic credit, usually in social studies.* The assignment of academic credit means that attention must be given to format, course objectives, grades and evaluation, and teacher role. It appears to offer more than the first option discussed; but it is not without problems, one of which is deciding how to divide available time between instruction and student government business. Two other problems are designing a course that will fulfill state requirements for social studies credit and finding a teacher who is willing and able to assume the duties of student government adviser-teacher.

A Model Curriculum for Student Government Classes

The following curriculum outline for a student government class has addressed these problems and may be adapted for your own school. It was developed by the author, the supervisor of social studies for the Prince George's County (Md.) Public Schools, a social studies teacher, and the student government association of Parkdale Senior High in Riverdale, Md., as a pilot project for the Prince George's County Public Schools:

Social Studies Seminar in Student Government

Purpose. This course will be concerned with the origins and resolutions of student government problems; will provide opportunities for students to learn parliamentary procedures, the purpose and organization of their student govern-

ment association, and the nature of representative government; will allow students to examine student rights and responsibilities and relate these to comparable principles of American government; will emphasize student discussion and interaction; and will provide students with occasions to interview their constituents and to advocate positions.

Credit. Two semester course, offering one unit of social studies credit (½ credit for each semester).

Selection of Students. Students who have been elected or appointed to the student government association (SGA) may take the course for social studies credit. Present sophomores and juniors may elect to take the course for an additional year, but they will *not* receive course credit the second year.

Supervision. Supervision of the course will be provided jointly by the central office social studies supervisor and the student activities director. Resource material and personnel from both offices will be available.

Organization. Course content and practical application (operations of the student government association) will be balanced throughout the year. The first semester will emphasize content, and operational skills will be stressed during the second semester.

Course Content Topics

I. *Organization and purposes of the local student government association*
   - A. Constitutions and charters
   - B. Officers—powers and duties
   - C. Representatives
   - D. Election procedures
   - E. Committee structure
   - F. General purpose—represent student viewpoint
   - G. Management of school functions—planning homecoming, coordinating assembly programs, reviewing club charters, etc.

II. *Group Processes*
   - A. Working together for a common goal
     1. How small groups operate
     2. How the general assembly operates
     3. How the individual operates
   - B. Rules of operating a structured group—parliamentary procedure
   - C. Shared decision making in committee work
   - D. Problems of status in a group power structure

III. *Communications*
   - A. Techniques of feedback used by delegates to constituents
   - B. Committee reports
   - C. Public relations activities

D. Promotion of communications between students and school administration

IV. *Conflict Management*
   A. Assess school climate
   B. Knowledge of power bases and pressure groups
      1. Administrative hierarchy
      2. School system policies and school rules
      3. Faculty organization
      4. Board of education
      5. Parent groups
      6. Student groups
   C. Techniques of mediation

V. *Student Rights and Responsibilities*
   A. Procedures for student involvement, rights, and responsibilities—using district policy statements
   B. Content of the document
   C. Interpretation of the document to students
   D. Grievance procedures
      1. Within the school
      2. At the central office level

Course Objectives

The objectives of this course will advance the continuing objectives of the K-12 social studies program. This is shown by noting the K-12 social studies objectives and the relevant course objectives.

Continuing Social Studies Objectives For Students in Grades K-12

1. To develop and live by a clear, consistent system of personal values.
2. To respect themselves and others.
3. To understand and use fundamental concepts about people and how they live together.
4. To understand and use knowledge of the basic processes and principles needed to function in American society.
5. To work effectively in groups.
6. To obtain information and interpret its meaning.
7. To analyze and resolve practical problems involving both values and information.

This course will also help students increase their abilities:

1. To recognize what they and others value with respect to school issues and policies.
2. To recognize the different viewpoints that students, teachers, and administrators bring to a school problem.
3. To clarify conflict situations that arise in school government and to suggest ways of resolving them.
4. To identify the sources of power of groups which function in their school.

5. To relate student rights and responsibilities to the constitutional rights and responsibilities of American citizens.
6. To recognize disagreements and seek compromises in student groups.
7. To survey homerooms for student opinions on questions coming before the student government.
8. To formulate and follow through procedures to implement a student grievance.

Evaluation of Student Attainments

Evaluation of student progress will be accomplished, in part, by obtaining student responses to the following tasks. Evaluation will be made by each student, his peers, and the teacher.

1. In what ways did the course help you clarify the things you believe in and value?
2. Describe a school problem taken up by the SGA this year. Indicate the different viewpoints held by students, teachers and the principal; suggest two ways of resolving it; describe the sources of power of the group(s) involved.
3. Relate three items in your school district's student-related policies to the relevant sections of the U.S. Constitution.
4. Demonstrate improvement on the enclosed group-process evaluation form.
5. Develop and administer a questionaire to get at student opinion on one issue facing the SGA.
6. Describe procedures to be used in carrying out a student grievance.
7. Complete a set of evaluation forms designed to measure how well you have achieved the eight objectives above.

Plan for Course Evaluation

The following procedures are suggested for evaluating this course.

1. The supervisor of social studies will interview the principal and the teacher as to the effectiveness of the course in meeting the objectives. He will also solicit their views with respect to the procedures indicated for credit, selection of students, and supervision.
2. The supervisor of social studies will collect data from the teacher on student achievement of the course objectives.
3. The supervisor of social studies will present data and course evaluation to the district office that deals with student concerns.
4. Recommendations for the course and other courses dealing with student government will be made to the director of instruction in February, and placed on the agenda of the instructional council during February.

3. Maintaining a Student Government

Any organization must perform some basic practical tasks in order to stay intact. Student governments are no different, although many have neglected the day-to-day duties which help keep them in smooth operation. Elaborate plans for restructuring the old student council sometimes ignore what makes an organization tick. Concentrate on establishing time tables, establishing procedures for recruiting new membership, and publishing records of the group's activities.

How can you keep your student government organization healthy? We recommend:

- ☐ building student leadership
- ☐ recruiting representatives for student government
- ☐ having regular evaluations
- ☐ streamlining school elections procedures
- ☐ fact-finding (collecting data)
- ☐ drafting, publishing, and introducing student government resolutions
- ☐ sponsoring school projects and fund-raising activities
- ☐ keeping up good communications and public relations
- ☐ maintaining committee structures
- ☐ keeping records
- ☐ working closely with the adviser
- ☐ keeping a good relationship with the principal

Leadership Training

Student leadership can prompt a lot of discussion, most of it in the form of questions.

- ☐ Who is a good leader?
- ☐ Are there ways to measure personality, physical appearance, the ability to "turn on" an audience, and some of the other elusive qualities of leadership?
- ☐ Can standards or simple tests be applied to those who are elected or appointed to lead?
- ☐ Are leadership training sessions valuable?

Workshop Training for Leaders

1. Workshop is an intensive practical experience in one or more subject areas, and most state student government associations sponsor leadership workshop sessions. Workshops are often structured as total, live-in experiences away

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from the school. School district or regional sponsorship is a growing trend. Some local schools sponsor their own workshops.

2. Staffing and staff training for out-of-town workshops can be tricky and requires great commitment. Teacher-advisers who are free for the summer can serve as staff members, with college students and experienced student government leaders as assistants.
3. A big "plus" gained from any workshop is the opportunity to share experiences with other students who have either "been through it before" or who are just starting out as student government leaders.
4. Camping trips or modified wilderness survival training sessions have become a part of some student leadership programs. Reflecting on such experiences, most students will remember the new friendships, camaraderie, and the feeling of working with others toward a common goal.

Other Training Experiences

1. Interships provide students with on-the-spot training under the direction of adult leaders. Just as a medical intern observes delicate surgical procedures, the high school student has opportunities to observe the techniques and strategies of state assemblymen, mayors, city councilmen, U.S. congressmen and senators, and others.
2. Annual student government conventions also present opportunities for leadership training. Seminar sessions are a good, simple format often used at such conventions. Skilled leaders with some background in conducting intensive leadership sessions often serve as models, as well as general discussion leaders in the seminar sessions. You can't expect to become proficient in leadership skills in a short period of time; however, such seminar sessions are valuable since they usually provide some practical materials and resource listings, as well as the opportunity to exchange thoughts with other students.
3. The "king/queen for a day" approach has been used by many schools to reward the efforts of student leaders. This type of program encourages students, particularly the leaders, to assume the responsibility of running the school for a day. (The student government president usually becomes the principal). In some areas, the concept is extended to city government and state legislatures. The benefits of such a ceremonial day are probably minimal, but the publicity and attention that student leaders receive gives everybody a good feeling—especially the king or queen.

A Job Description for Leaders

One major weakness in leadership is the lack of clearly defined job duties. In workshops and seminar sessions, the emphasis is usually on the intangible, philosophical aspects of leadership, and not on day-to-day operating responsibilities. Developing a job description for the officers of student government is one way to overcome this weakness. Below are some of the duties that may be included in a job description for the student government president or moderator. A president should:

- ☐ conduct meetings
- ☐ appoint and dismiss committee chairmen
- ☐ call meetings and set schedules
- ☐ delegate special assignments in General Assembly meetings
- ☐ be part of the regional student government delegation
- ☐ call student body assemblies
- ☐ make announcements to the student body
- ☐ meet regularly with the principal and faculty
- ☐ coordinate special programs with other schools
- ☐ know the charter, constitution, and rules of student government
- ☐ assume responsibility for student government mail
- ☐ appoint special committees as necessary
- ☐ run the executive council
- ☐ make contact with other school organizations
- ☐ make contact with the central office
- ☐ oversee school finances
- ☐ make presentations to outside groups
- ☐ check for periodic evaluations of representatives
- ☐ participate in the selection of the adviser.

Recruiting Representatives

The students who make up the General Assembly are called representatives, delegates, assemblymen, or some other similar title. They are elected or appointed by homerooms, classes, or clubs; or they volunteer or petition for the position.

Many high schools have trouble getting people into student government. One reason for this may be that few of them really understand the job.

Any student government can attract more students by making the responsibilities of representatives clear. Representatives should:

- ☐ attend general assembly meetings
- ☐ report to constituents on a regular basis through regular means
- ☐ serve on committees
- ☐ publish some reports during the year
- ☐ evaluate themseives on a regular basis
- ☐ draft resolutions for the general assembly

- ☐ vote
- ☐ accept special assignments from the president
- ☐ keep records of meetings
- ☐ follow through on legislation passed
- ☐ know school policies, rules, and the student bill of rights and responsibilities
- ☐ host school visitors
- ☐ attend workshops
- ☐ meet with teachers and principals
- ☐ present their constituents' concerns to the General Assembly
- ☐ survey constituents regularly
- ☐ maintain a standard of ethics
- ☐ represent a student position
- ☐ be a member of the parent-teacher-student association
- ☐ attend at least one meeting of the board of education
- ☐ know the geographic boundaries of the school and which
- ☐ areas students are concentrated in.

Student governments should consider the merits of developing job descriptions for other positions. A list of specific duties is helpful to candidates who are running for student government office. The purpose is to raise not only the candidate's awareness, but also the student body's awareness. Spelling out the job will give everyone a yardstick by which to measure successes and failures.

Evaluation

Every student office holder should be willing to be evaluated.

Many student groups don't even consider evaluations until some students become angry enough to want to impeach an officer. Most student government constitutions contain impeachment clauses that refer to attendance and other mechanics, rather than personal effectiveness.

Before you can evaluate, you need a specific job description—a guide to what the officer *should* be doing. Turn to page 00 for the student government president's job description. You can specify a standard for evaluation how well each task is being done. For example:

Task: Meet regularly with the principal.

Standard: The president will establish a regular time to meet with the principal every other week and will report back to the executive committee no later than the third school day after each meeting.

Evaluation: The president has completed this job
satisfactorily _____
unsatisfactorily _____

Task: Assume responsibility for student government mail.

Standard: The president will keep track of correspondence in and out of the student government mailbox and assign such duties as are necessary to see that all mailing is handled quickly and correctly and is accounted for in student government records.

Evaluation: The president has completed this task
satisfactorily _____
unsatisfactorily _____

Now, how are you going to apply the *same* kind of measurement to the student government as an organization? One way is to develop a similar checklist at the beginning of the school year for some general and specific things you want to accomplish. Mark them off during the year as they are accomplished. The completed and incompleted tasks should be included in the annual written report (see p. 00).

Elections

These cardinal rules must be followed for consistent election procedures in student government:

- ☐ complete fairness
- ☐ standardized balloting
- ☐ equal time for candidates
- ☐ some control over campaign literature.

The continuity of your student government needs to be maintained from year to year. A few student governments hold all elections in the fall, resulting in the loss of some representation and leadership at the close of the school year. Why not elect the major student government officers in the *spring*, allowing them to take office during the last few weeks before the summer vacation begins? Spring elections give the new officers an opportunity to participate in summer leadership training workshops and to do some planning before new representatives are elected the following fall.

Fact-Finding

Simply stated, fact-finding means studying what concerns students in your school. If there seems to be some grumbling about how much money is being spent for band uniforms, you ought to have some means to measure and verify the discontent. Whether you use a yes-no questionnaire or personal interviews with individual students, the method of feedback should provide you with enough direction to make a decision which will be well received by most of the students.

What Techniques Can You Use?

Surveys and Questionnaires. Most teachers have had some training in constructing straightforward questions designed to give measurable answers, and they are probably willing to

help you. These instruments must be designed without any bias or slant of viewpoint. A biased question might read: "Most students are not in favor of spending student government funds on band uniforms. Are you in favor? _____ Yes. _____ No." The same question, written in an unbiased manner, would read: "Some students favor spending student government funds on band uniforms, and others do not. We would like to know how you feel about this. Please indicate your position below. A circled (1) indicates that you favor it strongly, and (5) that you do not favor it at all.

1 2 3 4 5

Interviews. You may be able to get help from the school newspaper staff in developing and conducting individual and group interviews on one or more issues.

Other methods of gathering data are outlined in resource books in your library.

Drafting, Publishing, and Introducing Resolutions

Most student governments take action through formal resolutions which are voted on by the student government representatives. A resolution which is well-written adds much to the presentation of your case. A poorly developed resolution will not only make your organization look weak in the eyes of teachers and administrators; it will detract from the convincing case you're trying to make. A great many resolutions have "fizzled" and died out because of a lack of information, or because of hurried preparation in drafting and then duplicating enough copies for all delegates.

When an idea for a resolution arises, stick to some of the proven techniques of other students who have compiled winning records. Here are some points to keep in mind as you work on resolutions:

- ☐ Don't re-invent the wheel! Do some research on the subject. Somebody may have had the same idea in the past. Look at past resolutions, school policies and procedures, and local ordinances. Mention your research findings in the preamble to the resolution.
- ☐ Accumulate some facts and statistics. Survey some of the students in your school and include the results in your resolution.
- ☐ Introduce the resolution to the student government.
- ☐ Channeling resolutions to proper offices and personnel is easiest when the words of the resolution indicate all of the parties involved in any proposed action and in what order each party should see the resolution.

☐ The job of follow-up, cataloging, and final reporting is smoother when a standard form is followed. A standardized format is absolutely essential if resolutions are to receive the attention they deserve. So, keep this sample in mind.

a. Say *why* you are introducing your resolution in the preamble. It usually starts with "*Whereas. . . .*"

b. *Why* is followed by your statement of action or proclamation. Action or proclamation begins with, "*Therefore be it resolved that. . . .*"

c. It is very difficult for a student government to take action by itself (unilateral decisions), so most resolutions should be drafted as petitions for action. For example:

. . . Therefore be it resolved that the student government petition the superintendent to abolish bells . . .

. . . Therefore be it resolved that the student government support a change in the school board policy #0011 to the effect that . . .

. . . Therefore be it resolved that the student government designate a committee to . . .

. . . Therefore be it resolved that the student government support a change in regional, state, and national student government policies that call for . . .

Sample Resolution

Resolution #73-03, Student Activity Buses
Submitted by: Joanne Smith and Henry Carone; Walker Senior High School
Meeting Agenda: October 4, 1973

WHEREAS: Extracurricular activities and/or student activities are an extremely important part of school life at Walker Senior High School; and,

WHEREAS: Many students, because of a lack of adequate after-school transportation, are unable to participate in extracurricular activities; and

WHEREAS: The recent change of school boundaries for Walker Senior High means that many students will find it difficult to participate in after-school activities, thereby contributing to student apathy in school; therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Walker Student Government take immediate steps to ensure that the school system explore every possible way to provide adequate numbers of buses for transporting students involved in extracurricular activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That if such exploratory efforts prove unsuccessful, then the school administrator should give priority consideration to plans for modifying school schedules so that student activities can be incorporated into the regular school day.

Action: Passed Rejected
(circle one)

Referred to:
(names)

Notes:

Projects and Fundraising Activities

Good advice on school projects and fundraising is hard to get (and hard to give). Interests change quickly, and fad items such as buttons, beanies, and sweatshirts are usually popular for only a short time. Also, student tastes vary considerably from region to region, as well as among individuals in any one school.

Projects that are creative and have some original thought behind them are most likely to succeed. Student interest will perk up at something new, and the excitement of an original project will help to inspire student government members to carry it through.

Student Governments and Money

Money-making activities have been a part of school life for many years. However, as student governments become more involved in issues of student welfare, the time for and interest in purely commercial efforts tends to drop off. For example, a student government that is wrestling with a draft of a rights and responsibilities code may not be too enthusiastic about the upcoming magazine sale. The other side of the coin is that student governments sometimes become so involved in the mechanics of fundraising that little time and energy is left for *governance* and major school concerns.

Each student government must strike its own balance among its functions, including fundraising and governance. However, student government leaders should be aware that economic competition with other school clubs may tarnish the council's image—it becomes just another fundraising organization in the eyes of students in the school.

Coordinating Fundraising Projects

The most defensible role for student government in fund raising and projects is probably as the coordinating group for all other school groups; its responsibilities include scheduling all projects and exercising some control over which club or group is awarded the preferred fund-raising activities each year. In every school, there seems to be at least one fund rais-

ing drive popular enough to net considerable profit. Student government should ensure that no *one* club or group has a monopoly on this drive year after year. Monitoring the fund-raising activities of each club is an important job that must be done each year, throughout the year.

Student government must offer guarantees to school staff and student body that planned activities and fundraising events will actually take place. Finally, it must prove its credibility so that administrators will not be reluctant to assign such a heavy responsibility to students.

The student government association schedules all activities, coordinates all fund-raising, and acts as the voice of the school in spending money for student activities. Profits from all functions are turned over the the student government association, which has the power to spend this money on total-school events or to lend it to clubs or groups in the school which are in debt.

The financial responsibility of a student government is a very serious one and should be given a great deal of consideration. Under the financial structure proposed here (student government as school project coordinator), groups wishing to undertake projects or sponsor fundraising activities would be required to have the necessary funds in their own treasuries or to apply to the student government for a loan. Gone would be the days when the cheerleaders could plan a dance, hire a band, and *hope* to make enough money to cover their costs. When student government accepts financial responsibility for student groups, some valuable lessons in financial management and responsibility take place.

Communications and Public Relations

You may not think of "communications" and "public relations" as maintenance tasks, but they are. "They didn't do anything" is a statement frequently made by students who are asked to evaluate their student government association. Does it ring a bell for you? If so, it's probably symptomatic of "sick" communications, or worse—none at all. Few student governments do nothing at all; however, many neglect to advertise the things they do accomplish.

There is much to be gained by a regular communications effort for student government associations, especially if your high school is rather large and somewhat impersonal. Here are several methods that might work for you:

- ☐ *Written SGA newsletters* issued regularly or periodically to convey a point to the student body.
- ☐ *A mini-news sheet* as a piggy-back to the regular school newspaper.

- ☐ *Articles in the school newspaper* reach a large readership.
- ☐ *Use of a special bulletin board* in a strategic location
- ☐ *Special news shows* via the public address system, using a special, easily identifiable format. Use it sparingly—no more than once a week.
- ☐ *Oral reporting* in home room and/or during class time; You'll want full cooperation and commitment from the teacher.
- ☐ *Home telephone contact.* If every representative in the student government association offered to make 10 phone calls to constituents, it would indicate to the students that you're genuinely interested in them. (Congressional offices do this all the time.)
- ☐ *All-school assemblies,* using the format of a "town meeting" can be effective.
- ☐ *Video tape presentations.* If your school has the equipment and resources, this method has endless possibilities and should be explored.

This list is just a beginning. The important point is that students, like anybody else, get tired of listening, reading, or hearing news in the same old way. Whatever you do, change gears frequently, and don't rely on just one method.

Committee Structure

Since all tasks of student government cannot possibly be done in a large general assembly meeting. Some smaller groups must be established and maintained. The student government association works most efficiently when it sets up a realistic committee structure.

Some of the committees operate as work horses and others as policy-making groups. Some are permanent, operating the whole school year; others do one specific task and then dissolve. It doesn't matter what you call your committees but it *does* matter what the committees do. Committees seem to function best when they are composed of between five and twelve people and when they have regularly scheduled meetings. It's a good idea to post a meeting schedule for all standing committees (those operating all year) for the convenience of interested students and faculty.

The following standing committees are recommended:

1. *Budget and Finance Committee:*

- ☐ keeps track of all student government association (SGA) money
- ☐ approves all SGA spending
- ☐ works closely with school administration
- ☐ provides student input to school/school system budget
- ☐ meets with all club presidents

- ☐ approves and schedules all fundraising projects
- ☐ gives student government the power of the purse
- ☐ coordinates fundraising projects, rather than implementing them
- ☐ may levy taxes on the fundraising activities of school clubs in order to set up a "bank" from which clubs may borrow funds.

2. *Legislation Committee:*
- ☐ meets one week prior to each assembly meeting to coordinate and generate resolutions. Committee meetings should devote a regularly scheduled block of time to representatives wishing to bring legislation before the assembly
- ☐ examines all resolutions for proper form and sequence
- ☐ places resolutions on the meeting agenda for the assembly (the responsibility of the legislation committee chairman.

3. *Policies and Procedures Committee:*
- ☐ formulates or suggests revisions in the student government association's charter or constitution
- ☐ works closely with school administration on all school rules
- ☐ provides administrators with student interpretations of the bill of rights (if you have one); coordinates school drafting of a student bill of rights and responsibilities (if you don't have one)
- ☐ recommends changes in student government policies/procedures to the general assembly.

4. *Evaluation Committee:*
- ☐ develops and updates job descriptions for representatives, officers, and committee chairmen
- ☐ describes responsibilities of the general assembly, the standing committees, and the steering (executive) committee.

5. *Information Committee:*
- ☐ announces upcoming events
- ☐ reports student government business regularly to student body
- ☐ publishes periodic newsletters on issues of concern, SGA accomplishments, etc.
- ☐ is responsible for printing copies of meeting agendas, committee reports, and business resolutions
- ☐ publishes a year-end report on student government's accomplishments and resolutions.

6. *Activities Committee:*
- ☐ surveys the total student body regularly for preferences in activities and then works with school administration to set up those activities
- ☐ decides which clubs can have a fundraising activity, and when

- ☐ meets regularly with budget committee to approve fundraising activities and with the calendar committee to schedule same.

7. *Charter and Calendar Committee:*
- ☐ keeps an updated calendar of student government meetings, scheduled activities, and fundraising events
- ☐ reviews the charters/constitutions for all student clubs or organizations in the school and keeps a file on them and helps clubs wishing to get underway to draft a charter
- ☐ works with activities committee to schedule fundraising activities
- ☐ approves all club charters
- ☐ reviews club fundraising activities in order to assure that no one group has a monopoly.

8. *Human Relations and Grievance Committee:*
- ☐ works on improving social conditions, assessing school climate, relieving racial tension, etc.
- ☐ hears student complaints

Initially, assure the student body that the committee structure will be flexible and open to suggestions. You may want to keep one membership slot on each committee open so that students expressing an interest can attend as participants. Set realistic goals that can be accomplished in a reasonable time period and keep the students informed through good public relations. Any committee organization that moves and gets some practical things done does not lose its credibility with the people it serves.

Keeping Records

Keeping complete and accurate files, including all correspondence and financial records is a high-priority continuous task for student government. Try these suggestions at your school:

- ☐ Make a list of all clubs and student organizations in the school. Urge all the groups to update their charters or constitutions and explain their purposes, membership requirements, meeting schedule, and planned activities for the year. The resulting list will give you a total picture of your school's student activities.
- ☐ Develop a standard format for presenting resolutions to the general assembly. See page 00 for a sample resolution.
- ☐ Compile a year-end report which includes copies of all resolutions and a summary of other student government activities. The records should be available upon request to students and faculty.

Working With Student Government Advisers

It's important that you have an understanding of how student government adivsers are selected, their role, and some things that affect their judgment. In simple terms, you and the adviser *need* each other.

A lot of good material about the role of the adviser has been published. For a detailed description of the scope of adviser responsibilities, read Kent Keith's book *Now You're In the Middle*, available from NASSP.

The adviser has four basic roles:

- ☐ Guiding the proceedings of general assembly and executive committee meetings
- ☐ Maintaining and facilitating the day-to-day operations of the SGA, (scheduling meeting time, printing agendas, etc.)
- ☐ Serving as a "go-between" between the SGA and the principal; the SGA and the faculty; and the SGA and the superintendent
- ☐ Acting as a personal adviser and consultant to individual members of the SGA.

Using these categories and any others which you feel are important as an outline, list some *specific* duties that have been discussed, negotiated, and agreed upon by your student group, the adviser, and the school administration. One caution: be *practical*. Don't expect or demand that the adviser perform miracles—or do your work for you.

Get to Know Your Adviser

One factor that will affect the adviser's judgment of you, and yours of him, throughout the year is the level of trust that exists between students and adviser. Building trust takes time and requires a sincere effort to *get to know the adviser as a person*. Your first effort may be something as simple as believing that your adviser can do the job. Personalize the adviser's job by getting to know him so that you'll feel comfortable asking for his advice and counsel.

Selection of Advisers

The selection of advisers varies among schools and is not covered in legal school policy in many districts. Tradition, rather than policy, usually determines adviser appointment. Many advisers are appointed by boards of education or school principals; in other schools, the principal or vice principal serves as student government adviser. Some advisers are elected by the student government association.

With more students wanting more involvement in decision making, you may find that you have a greater role in selecting an adviser than your predecessors. If your student government will select or help to select an adviser, appoint a small committee of students and ask them to spend several hours with the present adviser. By discussing what an adviser's job is, you will gain insight into how the adviser feels about the job.

Perhaps you'll come up with a list of responsibilities that will be required of any *future* adviser. Even if student government does not select the new adviser, this list of responsibilities may help students to understand the adviser's job more clearly. The list should be practical and realistic, stating duties in terms of goals rather than as demands. In school systems where student government advisers change from year to year, the job description you develop may prove to be worth its weight in gold; because it indicates to the administration that your student government wants consistency, stability, and strength in its adviser.

Working With the Principal

How you work with the principal is an absolutely indispensable factor in the success or failure of a student government. If you want to bring a student government to a crashing halt, try disregarding the principal. Responsibility, power, authority, and control in a public school are now, as never before, open areas for negotiation with the principal. The trend in the last few years for fewer one-man decisions and more student, teacher, and parent responsibility and involvement is in your favor.

Student organizations, even without seeking it, are finding that they have more power. Some aren't ready for it, some use it wisely, some misuse it, and some don't even know it exists. Some principals are comfortable with sharing power and authority, and some are not. An understanding and discussion of such critical points must take place between a student organization which seeks to govern and the principal of the school who lives daily with awesome legal responsibilities for every student.

You will be wise to accept the fact that you're dealing not only with a job and position called *principal*, but also with a *person called Mr. Jones*. The principal's character is a big factor. Know this when you approach him. To ignore the *person* you are dealing with, even if you respect his position, is to court disaster.

Approaching the Principal

You can't effectively approach the principal with requests from student government without knowing the state laws (usually referred to as the annotated school law) and the board of education policies under which your school is governed. Few people know and understand every legal code that affects their schools; however, students can attain a basic knowledge of school law and have access to the code books.

Once you have a general understanding of the laws, you might request copies of organizational charts which define the role and function of your school administrators. In most sys-

tems this is called the *table of organization*. Pay attention to the charts, because you may someday want to appeal a principal's decision to a person in higher authority. If you can demonstrate basic understanding of school law, many principals will be honest in telling you how far a student government can go in decision making.

Negotiating with the Principal

Many good ideas in student government have gone down the drain because some people have been unwilling to compromise. What can you do? Negotiate.

If you go into the principal's office with all of the relevant facts and figures, plus a plan of action for some student issue, you probably hope the principal will buy the whole package. Maybe he will, but maybe he won't. Whatever the plan, you should develop a special list of the most convincing points, to be presented if the total package is rejected or questioned. As students, you are at a distinct disadvantage if you're not prepared for partial setbacks. If you show a willingness to compromise, a blanket "no" from a principal is unlikely; but if "no" is spoken, then your response should go something like this: "Mr. Principal, surely there must be some points in our proposal that you will agree to." Or, "Let's take a look at the areas that you have disagreed with. Could we make some adjustments and come back to you in a few days to discuss a revised proposal?"

This short discussion is not a complete lesson by any stretch of the imagination, but it should get you started thinking in the right frame of mind for *compromise*.

4. Working on Issues

Student government associations should be responsible for generating or contributing to solutions to general student problems. Student rights and school crime are two issues that many student groups are now confronting.

This chapter will take you through a step-by-step model for dealing with each of these issues. *These problem-solving models can also be used for other critical issues in your school.*

Students' Rights: Background

The American high school is historically steeped in authoritarian control. In such a setting, it is somewhat paradoxical that the student rights movement has been evolutionary instead of revolutionary. The techniques of protest and emotional demonstration that dominated college campuses during the middle and late Sixties were not widely adopted by high school students to obtain recognition for student rights. Why? Raw protest smacked too much of violence, and, given the degree of teacher and administrator control that characterizes most high schools, violence was impractical.

Public school students in the Seventies seem willing to work for their rights through the courts, open forums, underground newspapers, news articles, student government resolutions, and lobbying. Most of the advancement has been made through the peaceful path of the courts, and court action has affected all other techniques students have used. In a series of court cases from 1967 through the early Seventies, such issues as wearing armbands, length of hair, and censorship restrictions on school newspapers were tested in the courts. The courts ruled in most instances that young people were guaranteed the same rights as citizens at large. During the same period, the U.S. Constitution was amended to grant 18-year-olds the right to vote, thus bringing many high school students dramatically closer to the full privileges of citizenship.

One of the most effective ways for students and others to articulate their rights has been through the drafting of documents that clearly spell out how constitutional rights can be

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applied in the school setting. Some of these have been drafted by people outside high schools, such as lawyers, college students, and civil rights activists. Others have been drafted by boards of education or school administrators. During the early period of development, it was difficult to find examples of student rights documents that were developed by a *cross section* of the school community—a cross section including students and parents as well as teachers and school officials. The trend toward this kind of wide involvement has been recognized and is now growing.

In some districts the student rights movement has come to a near standstill. To get it going again, students will have to assume more than an equal share of the work load in drafting documents of rights and responsibilities that will be acceptable to the adults of the school community.

Notice that the word "responsibilities" has been joined to rights in that last sentence. Students have discovered that adults who are reluctant to legitimize the student rights movement are usually willing to bend if student responsibilities, as well as rights, are considered. In many schools and school districts, teachers, parents, and administrators are standing firmly behind the assumption that rights are not valid or possible without clearly defined student responsibilities. The reasoning seems to be that responsibilities and rights must be *balanced*.

Drafting and implementing of a document of rights and responsibilities can be achieved in five steps.

Step 1: Discussion

Start the discussion with a small committee of five to 10 students who are interested in a project on student rights and responsibilities and who have some time to research, read, and talk about the subject. You can find a lot of material on student rights, and digging for it is important. Don't feel satisfied with one bibliography, film, or model student rights document.

To get started, you may want to contact the National Association of Student Councils and request their *Bibliography of Student Rights*. Or write directly to other school systems for copies of their published documents. The Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship of the American Bar Association has published a comprehensive *Bibliography of Law-Related Curriculum Materials*. Write to the Committee at 1155 East 60th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637. This bibliography describes books, films, and articles that deal with the substance and interpretation of the constitutional rights you will be discussing.

As you research and examine other schools' models, you will discover some basic topics or categories. In a report titled Stu-

dent Rights and Responsibilities: A Reference for the School Community, the state of Maryland offers the following outline of points that should be considered in a document of student rights and responsibilities:

"Why am I here and what am I doing here?"

A. Student involvement
   Policy and curriculum
   Student governance and advisers
   Attendance
B. Extracurricular activities and clubs
   Participation in activities
   Use of school facilities

"What are basic rights and responsibilities?"

A. Student expression
   Student speech
   Student publications
   Dress and symbolic speech (armbands, buttons, etc.)
B. Student records and information
C. Search and seizure
D. Suspension and expulsion
E. Non-discriminatory practices
F. Patriotic and religious exercises

"How are decisions made?"

A. Due process procedures
B. Appeal procedures

Discussion of these topics and any others that you feel are appropriate to a student bill of rights and responsibilities for your school will take time. Your effort at this point should be directed at understanding the basic components; not in writing them or presenting them to other students, teachers, or administrators.

After compiling information, you may want to develop a skeletal outline to serve as a discussion guide for other students who will help with the project. You cannot complete the project with the original group of five or 10 students. Strength and support is needed from a larger group, so talk it up with others in class, in meetings, and in informal groups. You'll gain surprising support and credibility with the student body.

As the student interest grows, your next move will be to extend the information to teachers, principals, and parents.

One way to gain quick acceptance for your project so you can move ahead to an actual written draft is to receive a formal charge or assignment from someone in a position of authority, such as your superintendent. This is not always easy. You'll need to have personal contact with the superintendent, or some other "authority figure" who can give backing to the student rights effort.

The first step is to schedule a meeting. Don't go in cold. Get an adult—maybe your student government adviser—to help you prepare for the meeting and to attend with you. Prepare a short written proposal which specifies (1) a rationale for the project; (2) your expectations; and (3) a time frame for the project. Send it to the superintendent prior to the meeting. The proposal can be a springboard for discussion when the meeting takes place, and it will also illustrate the rational way you are approaching what may be considered a threatening subject.

During this meeting, your goal will be to emphasize the idea that student rights will be beneficial and that your project plan will bring about needed change peacefully. Recount what teachers and students have been discussing. Ask the superintendent for ideas. At this point, you are involving the top level administration in your school district. Ask the superintendent for a note or letter that states his approval for proceeding with the project. Such a letter gives real credibility to your effort and it should be shared with students, teachers, and your school administration as you continue working toward the document.

A more formal kind of approval can be requested from your local board of education or state board of education. The same kind of planning and discussion that is described for a meeting with your superintendent will be needed if you decide to seek a formal resolution of support from either of these groups.

Once you receive formal approval for the project from a board of education or superintendent, you'll be ready for the second step.

Step 2: Drafting

It's time to expand your original small student committee to a formal group which includes interested students, teachers, parents, and administrators. Enlistment of 20 to 40 committee members should be easy if you publicize the fact that you have received formal recognition and approval for the project. Students should make up the bulk of the committee, but you should include principals, guidance counselors, some parents, classroom teachers, and a representative from the superintendent's office so that different viewpoints are represented. Appoint or elect an adult moderator who will not make judgment as issues are debated but who will help to keep the committee on the track. Also, appoint a secretary.

From the outset, pay attention to details such as meeting facilities; transportation to and from meetings; convenient times to schedule meetings; forms to excuse students from school; parental permission slips; chart paper, pens, paper, and other material needs; printing arrangements; and a draft and distribution timetable. If these basic requirements are ig-

nored, the committee cannot function and will lose the interest and respect of the school community.

Most of the major issues that relate to the rights document have no doubt surfaced prior to the first meeting of the formal group. Use those issues as focus points for the new committee. The first order of business should be the adoption of acceptable procedures for the group to use in arriving at decisions. Look at a number of ways in which a fairly large group of 30 or 40 can reach agreement without prolonged debate or complex parliamentary procedure.

A major responsibility of the adult moderator will be to set a discussion agenda for each meeting. Time for subgroups of the larger committee to work on specific tasks must also be provided. Subgroup reports to the whole committee will probably result in lively debate. The agenda should include a time near the conclusion of each meeting to identify points of agreement. Save for later meetings those issues that generate the most controversy. The pieces may fall into place as you become more knowledgeable about the area of rights through exposure to court cases and other materials which the committee and subgroups of the committee have been studying.

It is critical for the committee to generate ideas and points of agreement. Don't fall into the trap of quibbling over wording. Insist that the adult moderator keep the committee on target.

Composing the First Draft

The first draft should be composed by a small writing committee of between five to eight students from the large committee who are willing to meet in full-day writing sessions with the adult moderator. After three or four meetings of the large committee, the writing committee of five to eight should begin its task of developing a rough draft. Writing sessions should be held as soon as possible following each committee meeting, so that the draft flows from the general discussions held in these large group meetings.

In addition to listing rights and responsibilities, the writing committee should include the following information in a first draft: (1) why the project started; (2) how the representative committee was selected; (3) the materials used to research the topic; and (4) letters of support or approval for the project. Print the draft in sufficient quantity for distribution to the people or groups who will be affected. This first draft will probably be followed by a second draft and maybe a third. The reaction stage, explained next, comes *between each draft.*

Step 3: Reaction

A reaction stage is necessary for any project which is the least bit controversial. If you're not ready to allow others to

react to your viewpoints, your project may backfire and end up with *more* rules for students or in confrontation between students and school officials.

How can you set up some machinery to distribute your first working draft to different publics for their reaction and review? The drafting committee should devote one full meeting to (1) identification of groups and individuals in the school community who should have the opportunity to react to the document and (2) the mechanics for getting back and processing these reactions.

Here are some suggestions as to who should get a copy of the first draft:

- ☐ A legal official within the school system—perhaps the attorney who advises your superintendent and/or board of education
- ☐ Principals and other school administrators, who will be directly affected by the implementation of the document
- ☐ Teachers—ask for comments from the official teacher association or union, and from individual teachers representing different areas of instruction
- ☐ Parents—contact a random cross section from the community
- ☐ Other students—ask for reaction from recognized student groups and from randomly-selected individuals.

How to Get Feedback

After you have duplicated or printed as many copies of this first draft as you need, a cover letter to go to everyone who will receive the draft should be written and signed by the moderator of the committee. The letter should:

- ☐ explain the task in one or two sentences
- ☐ refer to the superintendent's or board of education's support for the project
- ☐ ask for the reader's response in the form of a note, letter, or marked-up returned copy by a certain date.

Allow a reasonable time for people to react. You'll get some constructive suggestions that can be incorporated into the next draft, as well as some indication of the kind of support, criticism, or apathy that you'll encounter when you are ready for the formal presentation of a final document.

A note of caution: open hearings or public debates on the topic of student rights and responsibilities often turn into shouting matches. If you *do* schedule an open debate, you can expect some rebuttals which will be legally sophisticated and even intimidating. Written reactions are easier to deal with and less emotional than verbal reactions.

Using the Reactions

Summarize and review the written reactions to the first draft in the large committee. Be willing to make some compro-

mises. It's good strategy to include some of the thoughts of each group in the school so that the final document will boast a wide base of involvement.

Refine a second work draft, send it out for reaction, and see what kind of comments come back. If there's a lot of criticism, it will be necessary to go to a third draft. Eventually, the large drafting committee will feel satisfied with the substance and review of the document.

Now you're ready for the final draft. The small writing committee should attend to this task, seeking assistance from printers, newspaper editors, and others. Copy which is attractively presented will make an impression when you submit the document for approval.

Step 4. Approval

In Step 1, you got approval for proceeding with the development of a document of student rights and responsibilities document. Now you're ready to seek formal approval for the document itself.

School-Wide Documents

The route for approval is likely to be different for a document for one school than for one for an *entire school system.* Local approval should come through:

- ☐ *informal agreement* made with the principal, if the document affects just one school
- ☐ *approval by the superintendent of schools.* Most superintendents are granted broad administrative authority by boards of education. A superintendent may elect to incorporate the document of student rights and responsibilities into administrative procedures for the school system.
- ☐ *policy statement by the board of education.* Policy statements, usually in the form of resolutions, can be made by boards of education; and such statements become law for a school district.
- ☐ *state board of education action.* State boards formulate policy which affects all school districts in the state.
- ☐ *state legislative action.*

The steps of discussion, drafting, and reaction have been directed for the most part to students working on district-wide documents; however, those working on state-wide or individual school documents can modify those steps to suit their projects.

District-Wide Documents

Below is a sample approval course for documents for school districts:

Board of Education Policy Action

- ☐ Attend some board of education meetings and observe how this body takes formal action. Design your approach accordingly.

- ☐ Prepare for a formal presentation in an open meeting of the board of education, enlisting some support from those who have reacted to and been involved in the project.
- ☐ Schedule a presentation to the board members. Present the total package, including its rationale and the ways in which adoption would help the school district, rather than dwelling on specific points of the document. Be sure to allow the board members time to react before asking them for a decision. This may be a matter of days or even weeks.
- ☐ Emphasize that you have given others – adults and students alike – an opportunity to react to the project.
- ☐ Indicate your willingness to work with the administration on implementing student rights *and* responsibilities.

The Superintendent's Student Advisory Council (SSAC) of Prince George's County, Md., used a similar model to get approval for the rights and responsibilities document they developed during 1971-72 and 1972-73. The following paragraph is from the "Background" section of their *Procedures for Student Involvement, Rights, and Responsibilities*,[1] which is now the official rights and responsibilities statement for county students.

> Development of procedures related to student involvement and students' rights and responsibilities became the major task of the Superintendent's Student Advisory Council (SSAC) during 1971-1972. The council consisted of representative students, parents, teachers, and school administrators and operated on an ad hoc basis. The SSAC drafted a document of students' rights and responsibilities and presented it to the Board of Education on May 25, 1972. During June and July of 1972, the Superintendent of Schools solicited opinions on the document from principals and many others. Some minor revisions in the May draft, including broader statements of students' responsibilities, were made. The SSAC document was then modified into procedures for students' rights and responsibilities. During the 1972-73 school year SSAC worked to clarify and expand certain sections of the rights and responsibilities document and this printing reflects changes that were made.

Step 5. Implementation

Now you are ready to act on what you have worked so hard to achieve. The job at hand is to make every student knowledgeable about student rights and responsibilities and to convince people that student rights and responsibilities are important. Implementation can be considered in both short-range and long-range terms.

Short-Range Implementation

The simple knowledge that the document exists may be one of the most effective forms of implementation for the first few

[1]Copies of the *Procedures for Student Involvement, Rights, and Responsibilities* are available from the Office of Student Concerns, Prince George's County Public Schools, Upper Marlboro, Md. 20870.

months. To make it known in *concept*, not in detail, is vitally important. Prepare a press release to local newspapers and spot announcements for television and radio, especially those stations which have student listeners. Send a prepared announcement to the schools in your district and ask students to secure permission from the principal to announce that the document has been adopted. After the initial spot announcements and press releases, you can be more specific in the presentation of the document's contents.

An interesting first-year exposure to student rights would be a closed-circuit television presentation planned, acted, directed, and produced by a student government group. Scenes of students' rights incidents can be dramatized and the viewer can be prompted by a moderator to judge whether student rights have been upheld or violated in each incident. At the conclusion of each incident, the answer according to your student rights document can be given and a discussion period can be held. The results of such an exposure are not difficult to judge. While it would be virtually impossible to orient or introduce the student viewer to every specific point in the rights document during one program, the students can become familiar with *major* issues of student rights and responsibilities.

As the implementation of the document begins to affect the schools, you will probably see an effort by the *school district* to help publicize the new policy or procedures. If the school district has given support to the idea and concept of student rights, it will probably want to advertise the fact, perhaps in an official district publication, such as a superintendent's newsletter. Because official school publications can be notoriously uninteresting and full of educational jargon, reliance on this method as the only method of publicity is unwise. It is, however, a good way to gain official recognition and to inform all teachers and administrators about the document.

Publications for student consumption should be as informal as possible; however, statements of policy must be printed accurately. This will not be easy because of the rather technical or legal wording that characterizes a rights and responsibilities document, but it can be done. Study some of the more interesting student publications and think of some ways to explain in print, or perhaps even to illustrate in comic book form, some of the key points of the student rights document. A sample presentation appears on page 64.

Long-Range Implementation

The long-range implementation is a different story. Once the document has been accepted, it can become a part of the instructional program and be formally introduced to all students as they enter certain grades in the junior and senior high schools. Basic concepts should be introduced in the elementary schools through the social studies program or student govern-

ment orientation. You may want to offer your services as resource people to elementary school teachers who are seeking ways to familiarize students with the rights and responsibilities they will exercise in later years.

Full implementation at all levels—elementary through senior high—cannot be expected the first year. Distribute copies of the document to students and teachers at the beginning of *each* school year. If your goal is to have rights and responsibilities move from the printed page to the student, you can't rely on a one-shot exposure or on only one distribution. Your most difficult challenge is to keep the document alive through the responsible actions of students who accept and support it.

School Crime: Background

If the reports of violence and vandalism in schools are true—and there is little reason to doubt them—then students are the citizens of an endangered community. Consider the following:

- ☐ The national cost of school vandalism exceeds $200 million per year.
- ☐ The New York City school system employs more than 1,000 school security guards.
- ☐ School crime exists in urban, suburban, and rural settings.
- ☐ The box score of persons apprehended and convicted of school crime is miserably low.
- ☐ Congress has not yet adopted the Safe Schools Act, designed to assist school districts to carry out school security plans to reduce crime against students, school employees, and facilities.
- ☐ The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) lists school security as a high priority issue. IACP has the task of identifying critical issues in law enforcement and public security, and designing methods of addressing those issues.

Consider also the rather ominous article by Richard West which appeared some time ago in the *Los Angeles Times*. The first section is reprinted here.

"Something Extra for the Taxpayer"

All the fortress-like buildings—doors wrought of steel, windows of unbreakable laminated plastic—would be guarded by radar and silent alarm systems sensitive enough to be activated by a sound or a ray of light.

When an invader triggers the alarm, it would cause a red beacon light atop the building to flash on and off. Crews of patrolling helicopters would spot the light. They would radio ground units to move in swiftly.

The prowler would be caught in the act by police or guards specially trained for this type of situation.

All this smacks of a joint CIA-FBI operation or a security plan for a nuclear weapons installation or Ft. Knox. Actually, it is just a system

devised by the City of Los Angeles to keep vandals out of its schools nights and weekends.

It is difficult to determine the extent of school crime in the United States. No nationally uniform method exists for reporting crimes that occur in schools, and many incidents are never reported to the police but instead are handled informally by school officials.

If the statistics are in doubt, the range of serious incidents is not. The school crime list includes arson, larceny, unlawful intrusion, extortion, promotion and sale of narcotics, assaults, and carrying deadly weapons. The list has caused *Newsweek* magazine to reclassify the three R's as rape, robbery, and riot. Sensational titles, yes, but nonetheless they represent criminal incidents that now occur inside the school community.

School crime is linked with school size and location, too. Naturally, school security problems are greater and tougher to handle in larger school systems and in schools where the population is in the thousands. School crime in larger school districts is a fact of life, and small school jurisdictions in rural areas are affected by this brewing crisis as well.

Students who live in places where the problem is not yet critical should consider the suggested steps outlined in this section as steps of prevention. Those who come into daily contact with school crime may view them for positive action.

Step 1: A Student Discussion of School Crime And Security Measures

Some students exhibit a natural reluctance to discuss school crime, and you can expect a considerable negative reaction to student involvement with this issue. But don't think that student involvement in a discussion of school crime is out of place —after all, students are the *victims* in the overwhelming number of incidents.

Initial discussion among students will probably reveal negative attitudes rooted in fear and misunderstanding. It's important to allow time and opportunities for students to get out their feelings before tackling some concrete solutions. Attitudes will range from disbelief that there are serious problems to deep frustration that things are happening that nobody seems to be able to control. Some students will say it's no use to report incidents like extortion of lunch money; others will ask for armed guards in every corridor. A sure bet is that the majority of students will say that they have no faith in the school's ability either to prevent crime or to respond to it once it has occurred.

This airing of concerns should lead into a discussion of specific issues in your school and security measures that could be

taken to put a stop to them. Two specific issues that are sure to evoke a lot of comment are (1) the intruder; and (2) crowd control at dances, games, and assemblies. The intruder is any person who is trespassing on school grounds. Schools have had to develop intricate plans to cope with intruders, including a surveillance system of school entrances, exists, and grounds; a teacher and student identification system; and procedures for physically removing trespassers from school property.

In order to ensure the safety and welfare of students who attend large group functions such as dances, games, and assemblies, school officials have instituted a number of measures, such as:

- ☐ scheduling of functions during daylight hours
- ☐ assigned seating
- ☐ procedures for entering and leaving school functions in orderly fashion
- ☐ bans on cheering or spirit signs at games
- ☐ crowd dispersal techniques.

Clearly, every one of these measures touches on student life, and students in your school may be able to offer some alternatives.

Before proceeding any further, research the topic and gather some statistics.

- ☐ Write your congressman about pending federal legislation aimed at combatting school crime.
- ☐ Contact your superintendent's office and ask how much money is spent on maintenance and repairs resulting from vandalism in your school.
- ☐ Interview your local chief of police and ask how much time and money is spent on school-related crime.

With concrete data in hand, you're now ready to reorganize from an ad hoc discussion group to a bona fide student committee.

Step 2: Forming a Student-Centered School Security Committee

Rationale

Rexford G. Moon, Jr., senior vice president and director of studies, Academy for Educational Development, Inc., said in testimony before the House of Representatives Subcommittee on Education: "A long time ago the nation's big cities found that educated young people could be enlisted to help cool the streets, to serve as parent substitutes for those kids for whom the streets are more a home than the two-room apartments in which they live. These children don't turn off their "life-of-the-streets" when they come to school. Their value systems, frustrations, aspirations are with them as they are with all of us no matter where we are—in school, in the Con-

gress, or at home. My belief, the one that I preach whenever given an opportunity to do so, is that increased student service is the answer to school safety."

Student service in the area of school security can not only be quite effective, but it can also save a lot of money. At one of the larger senior high schools in Prince George's County, Md., a wave of thefts involving student cars parked on school property was ended when students organized a security service for themselves. With expert advice and direction from a security investigator-counselor (professional full-time, school-based security investigator), more than 150 students agreed to a regular, systematic patrolling of the student parking lot. Observation, and not direct involvement, was the technique stipulated for the student patrols. Auto break-ins were drastically reduced.

A report by the Panel on School Safety, appointed by the Academy for Educational Development said, "If the key to urban school safety lies in effectively mobilizing those who use the school, then the strategy for enlisting students and their organizations through which loyalty, power, and action are influenced and allocated must emerge from the School Safety Committee and School Safety Plan, in which students must be actively involved."

Composition of School Security Committee

A school security committee should include:

- ☐ Principal
- ☐ Student government officer
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ A school security person (if there is one)
- ☐ Representative from school supporting staff (cafeteria worker, custodian)
- ☐ Students (at least eight) representing all grade levels and geographic areas feeding into the school
- ☐ Parents (one or two)

The Job of The School Security Committee

The committee should:

1. Meet regularly (at least every other week) to develop a security plan for the school and to deal with school crime problems as they emerge.
2. Identify and list security problems in the school (e.g., thefts in the locker room, assaults).
3. Propose workable solutions for security problems, based on knowledge of the school.
4. Assist administrators, teachers, and security staff people in carrying out routine security functions (reporting of incidents, checking I.D.'s at door, identifying outsiders or intruders) and emergency security functions (exerting cooling influence on other students during crisis).
5. Use peer pressure and gentle persuasion if opportunities arise to discuss school crime with other students.

6. Push for changes in the curriculum to include information about school crime and its legal implications.

Students on the school security committee should be cautioned not to become junior policemen. They should not try to assume legal responsibilities that are held by policemen, security personnel, teachers, and principals. Remember, most students are minors under the law.

School crime is an overwhelming and complex subject not only for you, but for society in general. You as students have an opportunity to exert a positive influence if you have realistic expectations and proceed with caution and common sense.

Step 3: Support a District-Wide Office for School Security

School systems are now making strong efforts to combat school crime. Canine patrols, private security agents, and even moonlighting policemen have patrolled school corridors and stationed themselves at dances and athletic events. The latest and seemingly most effective force is the staff of trained, adult security officers hired by and responsible to the school system. Instead of relying totally on outside agencies, school systems have begun to create their own security offices to deal with school crime.

The training for school security personnel extends beyond an orientation to police tactics to include a broad, general understanding of school decision-making, disciplinary procedures, and human relations. People with some kind of investigative background (i.e. former policemen, social workers, special security guards, armed services police, etc.,) who enjoy working with youth can be given intensive training in the operation of schools in order to qualify for these positions in the school system. These security personnel do not need to be certified teachers, but they do need to be keenly aware of the purposes and goals of a school.

Professional school security officers may be male or female and generally do not wear uniforms. They are unarmed and carry an identifying badge, to be displayed only when necessary to their work. In short, they do not make themselves obvious, nor do they attempt to conceal their identities.

The responsibilities of a school security officer include:

- ☐ securing school money and property
- ☐ protecting the building against criminals and vandalism
- ☐ detecting fire hazards
- ☐ acting as a confidential resource to parents
- ☐ providing technical advice to principals on security matters involving individuals or groups
- ☐ providing information to classes and assemblies of students
- ☐ advising students of legal implications of certain acts

- ☐ providing and coordinating safety and security measures at special events
- ☐ providing the principal with a set of procedures and advice for conducting investigations of minor criminal offenses occuring on school property
- ☐ serving as a liaison to the police department and providing same with information on all criminal matters of a serious nature.

5. Beyond the Local School

The more your student government moves toward issue work, the more you will realize that the policies, procedures, decisions, and financing of your school are closely tied to events and people outside the school. Today, many school decisions are influenced by national politics, pressure groups, legislation at the state and federal level, bond issues, and a host of other complex, and sometimes disjointed, actions.

For example, take the seemingly simple case of whether or not a school can sell soft drinks. You might think that your student government association could pass a resolution, clear it with the principal, call a vending company, set up the machine, and begin to sell. Hold on—because that's not the case!

Soft Drinks—A Representative Issue

Selling soft drinks in school, as innocent as it seems, is not a decision that can be made at the local school level if the school district is participating in the federal school lunch program (and most schools are). Until recently, the federal guidelines for schools receiving subsidies under this program prohibited the sale of soft drinks and other items which would be in competition with nutritious school lunches. That meant that no student could have a carbonated beverage with lunch unless he brought it from home.

The 1973 Federal Regulations for the National School Lunch Program, however, give more leeway to state and local school agencies in determining the kinds of food services which can be offered while the school lunch is being served. Why the change in regulations? Who made the changes?

In practical terms, when a cafeteria manager told a student government president, "No, you can't put a soft drink machine in here," the president asked, "Why not?" The question "Why not?" led that student and others to the district-wide school lunch offices and further into the maze of regulations.

Students learned that they needed a voice at the district-wide level, and furthermore that district decisions were affected by state and national school lunch regulations. Two other concerned groups were involved—the vending machine and carbonated beverage lobbies on one side, and nutritionists, dentists, and doctors on the other. Students quickly realized that it would take an organized effort on their part—beyond local level—to resolve the issue.

In one school system the regional student government used its size and resources to plead the case. State, and national

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student groups joined to form an effective pressure group. The student position was picked up by congressmen, senators, and national, state, and local school lunch officials.

City, County, and District Student Government Associations

If you have more than three or four high schools in your district, there may be a chartered district-wide student government association that can provide a channel for some of your concerns. If not, or if it exists but does not really function, why not approach your superintendent of schools and make a case for district-wide student involvement?

The following statement, taken from a county student government charter, will give you some idea of how such a group can positively affect decision-making:

> The regional student government meets monthly and reaches decisions through formal resolutions. During these meetings, the delegates will be entitled to introduce resolutions which, if passed, will be directed to the superintendent of schools and/or members of the board of education. The regional student government represents the student position and viewpoint in many top-level discussions with advisory councils and committees.

State Student Government Associations

State student government organizations provide services such as newsletters, workshops, and conventions. A state group is a natural channel for a student voice that can be heard at the state department of education. If you don't know what your state association is doing, find out! If you don't know the mailing address of your state association, write the NASSP Office of Student Activities, 1904 Association Dr., Reston, Va. 22091.

National Association of Student Councils

The National Association of Student Councils (NASC) is an association of secondary school student councils and student governments. NASC publishes a monthly student activities magazine, *Student Advocate*, and several monographs on student leadership and student government issues each year.

The association also sponsors an annual national conference for student government leaders and advisers, assists state student council associations in organizing workshops, and holds National Leadership Training Center programs for student leaders each summer. NASC operates an international student leadership study program and a clearinghouse on student activities.

NASC is administered through the Office of Student Activities of the National Association of Secondary School Prin-

cipals, with offices at 1904 Association Dr., Reston, Va. 22091, in the Washington, D.C., area. Requests for membership, publications, and program information are welcome.

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Appendix: Some Sample Constitutions

A Sample Constitution
The Traditional Student Council

Article I: NAME

This organization shall be known as the Corinth Community High School Student Council.

Article II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the Corinth Community High School Student Council shall be:

A. To establish closer cooperation between the faculty and students of Corinth Community High School.
B. To establish standards of education, school spirit, and honor, based on school pride.
C. To provide democratic school government through representation and participation of the student body in school affairs.
D. To promote the general welfare of the school and community.

Article III: MEMBERS

Section 1 A senator (representative) shall be elected to the Student Council from each homeroom of every class.
A. Attend the general sessions of the student council.
B. Have one (1) vote in all legislative matters.

Section 2 Each senator shall:
A. Attend the general sessions of the Student Council.
B. Have one (1) vote in all legislative matters.
C. Be a member of at least one committee throughout the school year.
D. Report all student council information to his assigned homeroom.

Section 3 A. Senators shall be removed from office if they have one unexcused absence from a General Council meeting or have two unexcused absences from Committee meetings and/or if their work is deemed inadequate by 2/3 of the General Council.

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B. After each unexcused absence, the senator shall be notified.

Section 4 All vacancies created in the office of senator shall be filled by the officers of the student council, who will appoint a replacement based on the recommendations of the remaining class senators.

Section 5 Any student, with the approval of his subject teacher, shall be allowed to participate in the General Council meetings, except for voting.

Article IV: OFFICERS

Section 1 The officers of the student council shall be: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary, Parliamentarian, and Corresponding Secretary.

Section 2 The nominees for the Student Council officers are subject to the approval of the student body. The campaign week shall include an assembly which shall consist of speeches by each candidate to the student body

Section 3 Qualification requirements for officers shall be:

A. Junior or senior status

B. A C average or above.

Section 1 The President shall:

A. Preside over all General Council sessions or executive committee meetings.

B. Appoint all chairman of all standing or special committees.

C. Coordinate execution of the constitution and by-laws.

D. Call special meetings of the General Council or executive committee, with the approval of the adviser.

E. Vote only in the case of a tie or to make a tie in executive committees or general sessions.

Section 2 The Vice-President shall:

A. Assume all duties of the president in case of his or her absence or removal from office.

B. Perform all duties delegated to him by the President and the council.

C. Be an ex-officio member of all standing committees.

D. Be head of the interclub committee.

E. Serve as committee coordinator.

Section 3 The Parliamentarian shall:

A. Render decisions of order on questions of procedure.

B. See that all meetings are conducted according to *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.*

C. Have the power to remove from the general sessions or executive committee meetings any persons who habitually disturb the proper order of the meeting.

Section 4 The Treasurer shall:

A. Attend to all financial matters and act upon all appropriations and expenditures.
B. Submit a full report, upon request, of the funds of the student council.
C. Prepare and maintain an estimated budget.

Section 5 The Recording Secretary shall:

A. Keep and maintain a record of minutes.
B. Keep a file of school activities.
C. Publish minutes to all homerooms.
D. Prepare a copy of the minutes of the day of the meeting for the adviser's approval and the principal's approval. The minutes shall then be published in ample time for the next general session.
E. Prepare copies of the agenda for the executive committee and the general session.

Section 6 The Corresponding Secretary shall:

A. Maintain communication with all regional student councils.
B. Keep a record of all correspondence of the Council.
C. Assist the Recording Secretary in the publishing of the minutes.
D. Take attendance.

Section 7 Officers shall be removed from their positions if their work is considered inadequate by two-thirds of the student council in general session.

Article VI: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall consist of the student council officers, committee chairmen, and the vice-president of each class. Each member of the Executive Committee shall have one vote in legislative matters. The Executive Committee shall:

A. Meet before each student council meeting to plan the agenda for the next meeting.
B. Carry out the duties given it by the student council.

Article VII: MEETING AND QUORUM

The General Council shall meet at least every two weeks and whenever deemed necessary by the president of the student council or by two-thirds vote of a quorum of the Executive Committee. The meetings shall be conducted during the school day.

Article VIII: ADVISER

The adviser shall be a member of the faculty and an ex-officio member of all committees, shall advise the council in any way he deems necessary, and shall assist the council in any way possible.

Article IX: COMMITTEES

Section 1 The student council shall have the following Standing Committees:

A. Standards
B. Publicity
C. School Activities
D. Interclub
E. Educational Improvement
F. Building and Grounds
G. Human Relations
H. Elections

Section 2 Standing Committees shall:

A. Have a chairman from the student body appointed by the President.
B. Consist of student council members and interested members of the student body.
C. Carry out the duties delegated to it.
D. Be added as called for by the student council
E. Present a written report of activities before the General Council.
F. Have a faculty member as adviser whenever possible.

Article X: LIMITATION OF POWER

Any action taken by the student council is subject to the approval of the principal of the school.

Article XI: AMENDMENTS

Amendments to this constitution may be proposed in writing by the executive committee; the administration through the adviser; the students through the student council representatives; or the students attending the student council meetings.

Amendments to this constitution shall be approved by two-thirds of the members of the student council present at the meeting at which it is presented. Amendments shall then be ratified by two-thirds of the registered voters of the student body.

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Article XII: BYLAWS

Section 1 This constitution shall be ratified by the administration and by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members present at the student council meeting, and by two-thirds of the members of the student body.

Section 2 Regular meetings of the student council shall be conducted according to the following program:

A. Call to Order
B. Roll Call
C. Reports of Officers and Committees
D. Reading of the Minutes
E. Old Business
F. New Business
G. Miscellaneous
H. Adjournment

Section 3 Copies of the minutes of the previous meeting shall be distributed at each meeting, and time is to be provided for members to read them before they approve any motion concerning them.

Section 4 If a vacancy occurs for any student council office, the President shall have full appointive powers, subject to review by the executive committee and the approval of two-thirds of the General Council.

Section 5 The student council shall, with the approval of the administration, have the power to delegate any authority which it deems necessary for its function.

Section 6 The student council of Corinth Community High School shall be the supreme authority of all student organizations within the school. The decisions of the student council shall be considered to be the undisputed position of the student body in all relations between the student body and the administration.

A Sample Constitution
Student-Faculty Senate

Article I: NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Student-Faculty Senate (SFS)

Article II: PURPOSE

The Senate shall serve as both a policy-making and advisory body, and it has established the following objectives:

1. Represent the members of the educational community in the formulation and execution of school policy.
2. Make official recommendations to the administration and other appropriate policy making bodies.
3. Provide a meeting ground for students and faculty.
4. Serve as a problem-solving body.

Article III: JURISDICTION

The Senate shall have complete jurisdiction over all school matters with the following exceptions:

1. Those unilaterally governed by either the state or the local board of education.
2. Those that the principal, as chief administrative officer, cannot delegate.
3. Those within the realm of the professional responsibility of a teacher.
4. Those already delegated to the student government association.

The principal may override a decision of the chair regarding matters of jurisdiction. In addition, the principal has automatic veto over *all* actions of the Senate.

Article IV: MEMBERSHIP

The Senate shall be composed of fifteen elected voting student members; fifteen elected voting faculty members; the principal or his designee as a voting member; and the elected officers of the student government association as non-voting members.

Student membership shall be divided equally by classes and students may serve for consecutive years.

Faculty membership shall be apportioned according to the number of staff in each department.

If a vacancy should occur due to a member's resignation, a replacement will be jointly decided upon by the principal and executive officers.

Article V: OFFICERS

The officers of the Senate shall be:

1. A voting chairman whose duties are to preside and appoint such committees as the Senate deems necessary. The chairman will call at least one meeting a month.
2. A voting vice-chairman to preside in the absence of the chairman.
3. A voting secretary to record the minutes, take attendance, and carry out clerical duties.

Article VI: DUTIES OF THE MEMBERSHIP

It is the duty of all Senate members to introduce problems or resolutions presented to them by any student or teacher to the Agenda Committee with his/her signature.

Faculty members should be ready to discuss proposed Senate actions within their departments before each regularly scheduled Senate meeting and make a report to their departments after all meetings.

At the beginning of the school year, the senators from each class should meet together in a class delegation to elect a delegation chairman. This chairman is then responsible for calling an open meeting of the delegation before each Senate meeting to discuss the agenda. In addition each senator will be assigned a certain number of homerooms by his delegation chairman to which he is to make monthly reports.

Article VII: PROCEDURE

All meetings shall be conducted by common rules of courtesy and simplified parliamentary procedure.

At least sixteen members must be present to constitute a quorum, of whom eight must be faculty members and eight must be students.

Three-fifths (3/5) of those present and voting is required to pass a resolution.

Note: Some student-faculty senate organizations also include parents as regular members. Also, in many schools, a student-faculty senate co-exists with a student council or similar broad-based representative organization.

School Government—Shared Responsibility

Richfield High School, Richfield, Minn., operates under policies set by a board of education and the Richfield School Council, composed of students, faculty, and administrators. The description below originally appeared as an article in the May/June 1973 issue of Student Life Highlights, *newsletter of the National Association of Secondary School Principals' Office of Student Activities.*

The School Council has 21 members—10 elected students, 8 elected teachers, the two principals, and the student affairs administrator. The School Council has the power to set school policy so long as it does not violate the policies of the school board.

Two years ago, when members of the "old" student council approached Principal Gene Olive for permission to explore alternatives to the existing student government, they weren't sure what would happen. Olive listened to the students and appointed four faculty members to work with them in studying and developing alternatives.

"We (students, faculty, and administration) felt we had to have a form of student government that would involve all segments of the school community," says Agnes Danzl, administrative assistant for student affairs. "We met several times a week for a number of months and finally submitted a constitution that we felt represented all members of the school. The constitution was explained to and discussed with faculty and students. It was overwhelmingly accepted by students and faculty in the spring of 1971."

Two Student Government Organizations

The new constitution created two student government organizations. The former student council became the Student Senate with the primary function of channeling information and student concerns to the new School Council and coordinating and carrying out service and social activities. The School Council deals with matters of academic and administrative policy and is composed of students, faculty, and administrators, as described above. The School Council may also delegate responsibilities to the Academic and Administrative Committees of the Senate.

The Veto Power

Article IX, of the Richfield High School Constitution describes the powers of the School Council to override an administrative veto.

"All actions of the School Council may be reviewed by the administration, at which time a veto may be issued."

"In the case of a veto, the School Council must receive a statement, stating objections to the measure in question. This statement must be received within two weeks of the veto."

"All vetoes shall be considered by the School Council and a three/fourths majority vote shall be required to override a veto."

It is the last item which has drawn so much attention to the new constitution. It is obvious that the 18 student and faculty members could override the administration's three votes to achieve a three/fourths majority.

Working With The Administration

Is the administration upset about this? No. Academic Princiapl Alfred Krinke told a reporter, "Our feeling is that if we get overridden by that much of a majority, maybe the new policy is worth going ahead on."

Indicative of the cooperation among members of Richfield High's School Council is the fact that its veto power has yet to be used.

The positive function of the School Council has been demonstrated, however. In its proposal for an open lunch program, the School Council formally stated two goals for the school:

"Richfield graduates will possess the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to make them socially responsible individuals."

"Richfield graduates will be self-disciplined and dependable individuals."

The Council then listed six ways in which an open lunch program would help students to attain those goals: independence, self-enforcement of responsibility, trust, community feeling, learning to use one's time well, and practicing a school law.

Also in the proposal were nine practical reasons for accepting it, and detailed regulations in ten different areas.

The proposal was accepted.

Another proposal formulated by the School Council and accepted by the school board was for a study hall system which would give students seven free-time alternatives in addition to study hall and would create a student lounge. Again, the School Council proposed its own detailed regulations for running this system, thereby countering many potential objections before they arose.

Is It Working?

The Richfield plan is based on one pioneered by a California high school. Agnes Danzl, administrative assistant for student

affairs and the School Council coordinator, says, "Last year (1971-72) was the first full year of our School Council and Student Senate. The new constitution appears to have helped to create an atmosphere in which students, faculty, and administration want to work together as a cooperative unit. Students feel they can interact with adults in the high school."

The preamble to Richfield High School's Constitution states: "*Democracy is founded on citizen participation in decision making and is nourished by the individuality, creativity and responsibility of all citizens. The educational system must be based on the same concept of citizen participation and should encourage the individuality, creativity and responsibility of all members of Richfield High School.*"

The new constitution seems to be doing just that.

General Statement and Constitution Student-Faculty-Administration Council (SFA) Yorktown High School

The school community at Yorktown High School realized the importance of developing a procedure involving all levels of school personnel to review, to maintain, to innovate and to implement those activities and programs which would enrich and improve school life and studied many possibilities.

The Student-Faculty-Administration Council, which is an elected representative body, was developed to govern the school community. The Council is assisted by commissions of elected and appointed members which carry out the directives of the Council and/or act in an initiatory and advisory capacity.

The Council and the commissions endeavor to provide an open atmosphere of communication; to encourage participation in the school community; to involve students, faculty, and administration in a cooperative group effort to work for continuous school improvement; to provide means to develop a sense of the responsibilities and values of school life; to encourage good academic achievement and environment; and to ensure that learning is foremost in school life.

PURPOSES

The purposes of the Council are to deal with school policies relating to academics, rules and regulations, culture, services, and rights and responsibilities. The Council will also deal with initiating changes in keeping with good educational practices for the benefit of students, faculty and administration within Arlington School Board Policies and regulations and those of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

POWERS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council shall concern itself with any and all areas of the educational environment pertaining to students, faculty and administration. These are:

1. To set school policy that is not in conflict with rules, regulations, and laws established by the Arlington School Board and the Laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. To recommend change in policy to the Arlington School Board, Director of Secondary Education and Superintendent of Schools, and/or the State Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
3. To review existing regulations and establish new regulations for governing and establishing procedures in Yorktown High School.
4. To collaborate with students, faculty and administration in establishing curriculum.
5. To implement the regulations decided on by the Council.
6. To initiate changes and/or act on petitions presented by the students, faculty, and administration that are in keeping with policy.
7. To establish and coordinate school activities.
8. To approve and supervise the actions of the Commissions.
9. To appoint, approve and supervise the actions of additional Commissions and sub-Commissions which the Council may establish.
10. To present, when necessary, issues to the students, faculty, and administration for a vote. For an issue to be decided, a simple majority of the votes cast by no less than 50 percent of the student membership, 50 percent of the faculty membership, and 50 percent of the administration membership is necessary.
11. To have such authority as is delegated to it elsewhere in this constitution.

The Council shall not:

1. Make rules contrary to Arlington School Board policy, including contractual arrangements between Arlington School Board and the school staff, nor contrary to the State Board of Education of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. Discuss individual personalities.
3. Evaluate teaching.

ORGANIZATION

The Council shall be made up of 13 members :six students, six faculty members, and one administrator.

Student Members: There shall be two representatives from each grade level elected by the students, and three alternates, each representing a grade level. (See ELECTION PROCEDURES).

Faculty Members: There shall be six faculty members and two alternates elected by the faculty.
Administration: The Principal of the school shall serve on the Council. An alternate, elected by the administration, shall serve when the principal is unable to attend.
Comptroller: The Comptroller shall be appointed by the Council and need not be an elected member of the Council.
Secretary: The Secretary shall be appointed by the Council and will not be a member of the Council.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

A. Students

1. Two-thirds of the complement of students in the Council (next year's juniors and seniors) shall be elected the last week of April. The outgoing senior class shall not vote. The remaining one-third (sophomores) shall be elected by the third week in October by the total student membership.
2. No student shall be denied the right to run for SFA Council membership, provided he complies with the procedures established by the Election Committee.
3. If more than four students from each grade-level file to run for SFA Council, there shall be a primary election. In the primary election, each student in the school may vote for no more than four persons—two from each current sophomore and junior class. The four top candidates in each class (or more, if there are ties) receiving the greatest number of votes shall be placed on the ballot for final election.

   The same procedure shall be used for the sophomore fall election for SFA Council membership.
4. In the final election, each student shall vote for no more than four persons in the April election and no more than two in the October election. The two students in each class level receiving the highest number of votes will be seated in the SFA Council. The students receiving the third highest vote in each class level shall be alternates and shall be seated in the SFA Council and may take part in the discussion but shall vote only when filling absences.

B. Faculty

The faculty shall determine its own procedures for electing six faculty members and two alternates. The alternates are those who receive the next two highest numbers of votes. The alternates shall be seated on the Council and may take part in the discussion but may not vote except when filling absences.

C. Administration

The administration shall determine the election of the al-

ternate to the principal. The alternate will be seated on the Council and may take part in the discussion but may not vote except when filling an absence.

OFFICERS AND THEIR DUTIES

A. The Chairman:
   1. Shall be elected by the SFA Council at its first organizational meeting from among members of the Council. If a student is elected chairman, the vice-chairman shall be a teacher or an administrator.
   2. Shall preside over all Council meetings.
   3. Shall be the Council's official spokesman.

B. The Vice Chairman:
   1. Shall be elected by the Council from among its members. If a teacher or an administrator is elected chairman, the vice chairman shall be a student.
   2. Shall preside over meetings by the chairman's request or in the event of the chairman's absence.

C. The Comptroller:
   1. Shall be appointed by the SFA Council. He is not required to be a member of the Council. If not a member, he may enter in the discussion but may not vote.
   2. Shall collect funds, pay bills in accordance with the policies, rules and regulations of the school, Arlington County School Board and the Commonwealth of Virginia and be responsible for any transfer of Council money.
   3. Shall prepare the next year's operating budget for SFA Council and the commissions.
   4. Shall be a member of the school finance committee.
   5. Shall keep books subject to auditing.

D. The Secretary:
   1. Shall be appointed by the Council.
   2. Shall take written minutes of all Council meetings and see that they are published and distributed within a week of the previous meeting.
   3. Shall handle SFA correspondence.
   4. Shall perform all secretarial duties prescribed by the Council.
   5. Shall maintain a file on all Council business. This file shall be accessible to all members of the school community.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

A. Council meetings shall be held at least twice a month during the school year.
B. The Council shall determine its own meeting days.
C. Provided they are publicly announced, emergency meet-

ings may be called by the chairman of the council or by a petition of five members of the Council.

D. Each Council member may cast one vote on any decision. A majority shall consist of eight votes.
E. A quorum shall consist of eight Council members present. It must include no less than three students, three faculty members, and one administrative member. Voting by proxy shall not be permitted.
F. Observers may attend meetings. They may participate in discussion with the consent of the Council.
G. The chairman of the Council may call special closed meetings for special work of the Council. Final decisions will not be made in special meetings.

REMOVAL FROM COUNCIL

A. The SFA Council may expel any of its members or members of any SFA Commission for excessive absence, upon the vote of nine or more members. *Excessive* absences shall be determined by the Council.
B. Students desiring to remove a student representative for reasons *other than* excessive absences from the Council shall present a petition to this effect bearing the signatures of one-third of the students in the membership in the high school. A referendum shall be held in which 50 percent of the student membership must vote. If two-thirds of those students who vote vote for removal, the student representative shall be removed from the Council.
C. Faculty members may be removed by the same procedures of petition and voting by the faculty.

VACANCY

Upon a vacancy in membership in the Council, whether on account of resignation, expulsion, or removal, the Council shall seat the next alternate student, faculty member or administration member—depending upon the vacancy.

COMMISSIONS

The SFA Council shall be assisted by Commissions which cover areas of school life as stated in the purposes of the Council.

PURPOSES

The purposes of the Commissions are to carry out the task directives of the Council and/or to initiate programs or projects relating to its areas of responsibilities for Council action.

ORGANIZATION

Each Commission shall consist of seven students and two faculty members.

Student members: Four of the student members on each Commission shall be elected by the student body. Three student members of each Commission shall be appointed by the Council.

Faculty Members: There shall be two faculty members on each Commission, selected by the faculty according to its own procedures.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

Student Members: Three of the four elected members of each Commission shall be selected in the April elections, and two of the appointed members shall also be selected in April. The other complement shall be elected and appointed from the sophomore class in the October elections.

Faculty Members: The faculty members shall be elected according to procedures established and agreed to by the faculty.

POWERS AND DUTIES

Each Commission shall have those decision-making powers that are vested in them by the Council. It shall assist the Council as requested by it, may initiate Council action programs and projects relating to its areas of responsibility, and shall issue regular reports to the Council.

AREA COMMISSIONS

The *Academics Commission* shall explore and make recommendations concerning curriculum, instruction, and scholarship.

The *Rules and Regulations Commission* shall review, explore and make recommendations concerning student-faculty-administration relationships and school rules and regulations. It shall examine the need for constitutional amendments and make recommendations.

The *Cultural Commission* shall aid the Council in arranging assemblies and seminars, in promoting the honor societies, and in approving exhibits and other activities as they arise.

The *Service Commission* shall be concerned with assisting the Council in the social areas of school life. It shall work in chartering clubs, raising funds, and providing student recreation programs and other activities relating to their area as they arise.

The *Rights and Responsibilities Commission* Shall serve as a consulting and advisory body for any one in the school community who needs information to appeal a decision or right a situation.

AMENDMENTS AND BYLAWS

Amendments and bylaws to this Constitution shall be presented by the Council and shall become part of this Constitution after approval by a simple majority of the student body and by a simple majority of the faculty and by a simple majority of the administration. At least 50 percent of the students, 50 percent of the faculty, and 50 percent of the administration must vote.

REFERENDUM

If a decision of the Council that has not been presented to the student body, faculty, and administration for a vote is called into question, a petition bearing the signatures of one-third of the student body, or one-third of the faculty membership, or one-third of the administration may be presented to the Council for the matter to be reconsidered.

Upon receiving the petition, the Council has two alternatives:

1. To modify the original decision or
2. To submit it to a referendum. The referendum is carried out after a school assembly at which both sides of the issue are given a formal presentation.

For a valid referendum, a minimum of 50 percent of each group—student, faculty, and administration—must vote. A majority of each group decides the issue.

The Principal may use his veto power, if there is obvious jeopardy to the school proper, and/or school name and/or if there is discrimination to any part of the student body, faculty, or administration.

INTERIM PROCEDURES

At the last meeting of each year the outgoing SFA Council will turn over the authority to the incoming SFA Council. This Council shall:

1. Appoint an Election Committee which shall establish procedures and supervise conduct of student campaigns for SFA Council membership and Commission membership for the fall and spring elections. After the fall election, the sophomore class shall be represented on the Election Committee.
2. Set a date for elections in fall and spring.

RATIFICATION

This Constitution shall take effect upon approval by a simple majority of the voting students present, a simple majority of the voting faculty present, and a simple majority of the voting administration present. Fifty percent of each group present in the school that day must vote.

This Constitution supersedes the previous Constitution and bylaws. All standing policies and obligations made previously by the student council and faculty and administrative associations shall remain in force following ratification until changes are effected by the Council.

Acknowledgment

This book is the result of the cooperative efforts of a lot of people, many of whom can be called students, even though they teach. Their enthusiasm, creativity, and expertise go beyond the bounds of these pages.

Particular appreciation is extended to my friend and associate Sally A. Majak, whose assistance made the idea of this book a reality.

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